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# FORS CLAVIGERA

VOL. I

# FORS CLAVIGERA

## LETTERS

*TO THE WORKMEN AND LABOURERS OF GREAT BRITAIN*

BY

JOHN RUSKIN, D.C.L., LL.D.

NEW EDITION

VOL. I.

CONTAINING LETTERS I–XXIV

GEORGE ALLEN, SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON

AND

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# ADVICE

## TO THE NEW EDITION

THIS edition of *Fors* is published for the use of readers who are content to have Mr. Ruskin's own Letters without those of his correspondents.

By omitting from the appendices of the former issue everything except such passages as are necessary to explain the text, the eight large volumes are now reduced to four of a handy size, uniform with the cheap edition of the Works Series.

All the illustrations are given; the full-page photographs reproduced as tint blocks from the original negatives; and a new index is added to each of the volumes.

W. G. C.

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(1871–1872)


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# FORS CLAVIGERA

## LETTER I

*LOOKING DOWN FROM INGLEBOROUGH*

DENMARK HILL,
*1st January*, 1871.

FRIENDS,

WE begin to-day another group of ten years, not in happy circumstances. Although, for the time, exempted from the direct calamities which have fallen on neighbouring states, believe me, we have not escaped them because of our better deservings, nor by our better wisdom; but only for one or two bad reasons, or for both: either that we have not sense enough to determine in a great national quarrel which side is right, or that we have not courage to defend the right, when we have discerned it.

I believe that both these bad reasons exist in full force; that our own political divisions prevent us from understanding the laws of international justice; and that, even if we did, we should not dare to defend, perhaps not even to assert them, being on this first of January, 1871, in much bodily

fear; that is to say, afraid of the Russians; afraid of the Prussians; afraid of the Americans; afraid of the Hindoos; afraid of the Chinese; afraid of the Japanese; afraid of the New Zealanders; and afraid of the Caffres: and very justly so, being conscious that our only real desire respecting any of these nations has been to get as much out of them as we could.

They have no right to complain of us, notwithstanding, since we have all, lately, lived ourselves in the daily endeavour to get as much out of our neighbours and friends as we could; and having by this means, indeed, got a good deal out of each other, and put nothing into each other, the actually obtained result, this day, is a state of emptiness in purse and stomach, for the solace of which our boasted "insular position" is ineffectual.

I have listened to many ingenious persons, who say we are better off now than ever we were before. I do not know how well off we were before; but I know positively that many very deserving persons of my acquaintance have great difficulty in living under these improved circumstances: also, that my desk is full of begging letters, eloquently written either by distressed or dishonest people; and that we cannot be called, as a nation, well off, while so many of us are either living in honest or in villainous beggary.

For my own part, I will put up with this state of things, passively, not an hour longer. I am not an unselfish person, nor an Evangelical one; I have

no particular pleasure in doing good; neither do I dislike doing it so much as to expect to be rewarded for it in another world. But I simply cannot paint, nor read, nor look at minerals, nor do anything else that I like, and the very light of the morning sky, when there is any—which is seldom, now-a-days, near London—has become hateful to me, because of the misery that I know of, and see signs of, where I know it not, which no imagination can interpret too bitterly.

Therefore, as I have said, I will endure it no longer quietly; but henceforward, with any few or many who will help, do my poor best to abate this misery. But that I may do my best, I must not be miserable myself any longer; for no man who is wretched in his own heart, and feeble in his own work, can rightly help others.

Now my own special pleasure has lately been connected with a given duty. I have been ordered to endeavour to make our English youth care somewhat for the arts; and must put my uttermost strength into that business. To which end I must clear myself from all sense of responsibility for the material distress around me, by explaining to you, once for all, in the shortest English I can, what I know of its causes; by pointing out to you some of the methods by which it might be relieved; and by setting aside regularly some small percentage of my income, to assist, as one of yourselves, in what one and all we shall have to do; each of us laying by something, according to our means, for the common

service; and having amongst us, at last, be it ever so small, a National Store instead of a National Debt. Store which, once securely founded, will fast increase, provided only you take the pains to understand, and have perseverance to maintain, the elementary principles of Human Economy, which have, of late, not only been lost sight of, but wilfully and formally entombed under pyramids of falsehood.

And first I beg you most solemnly to convince yourselves of the partly comfortable, partly formidable fact, that your prosperity is in your own hands. That only in a remote degree does it depend on external matters, and least of all on forms of government. In all times of trouble the first thing to be done is to make the most of whatever forms of government you have got, by setting honest men to work them; (the trouble, in all probability, having arisen only from the want of such;) and for the rest, you must in no wise concern yourselves about them; more particularly it would be lost time to do so at this moment, when whatever is popularly said about governments cannot but be absurd, for want of definition of terms. Consider, for instance, the ridiculousness of the division of parties into "Liberal" and "Conservative." There is no opposition whatever between those two kinds of men. There is opposition between Liberals and Illiberals; that is to say, between people who desire liberty, and who dislike it. I am a violent Illiberal; but it does not follow that I must be a Conservative. A Conservative is a person who wishes to keep things as they are;

and he is opposed to a Destructive, who wishes to destroy them, or to an Innovator, who wishes to alter them. Now, though I am an Illiberal, there are many things I should like to destroy. I should like to destroy most of the railroads in England, and all the railroads in Wales. I should like to destroy and rebuild the Houses of Parliament, the National Gallery, and the East end of London; and to destroy, without rebuilding, the new town of Edinburgh, the north suburb of Geneva, and the city of New York. Thus in many things I am the reverse of Conservative; nay, there are some long-established things which I hope to see changed before I die; but I want still to keep the fields of England green, and her cheeks red; and that girls should be taught to curtsey, and boys to take their hats off, when a Professor or otherwise dignified person passes by; and that Kings should keep their crowns on their heads, and Bishops their crosiers in their hands; and should duly recognise the significance of the crown, and the use of the crook.

As you would find it thus impossible to class me justly in either party, so you would find it impossible to class any person whatever, who had clear and developed political opinions, and who could define them accurately. Men only associate in parties by sacrificing their opinions, or by having none worth sacrificing; and the effect of party government is always to develope hostilities and hypocrisies, and to extinguish ideas.

Thus the so-called Monarchic and Republican

parties have thrown Europe into conflagration and shame, merely for want of clear conception of the things they imagine themselves to fight for. The moment a Republic was proclaimed in France, Garibaldi came to fight for it as a "Holy Republic." But Garibaldi could not know,—no mortal creature could know,—whether it was going to be a Holy or Profane Republic. You cannot evoke any form of government by beat of drum. The proclamation of a government implies the considerate acceptance of a code of laws, and the appointment of means for their execution, neither of which things can be done in an instant. You may overthrow a government, and announce yourselves lawless, in the twinkling of an eye, as you can blow up a ship, or upset and sink one. But you can no more create a government with a word, than an ironclad.

No; nor can you even define its character in few words; the measure of sanctity in it depending on degrees of justice in the administration of law, which are often independent of form altogether. Generally speaking, the community of thieves in London or Paris have adopted Republican Institutions, and live at this day without any acknowledged Captain or Head; but under Robin Hood, brigandage in England, and under Sir John Hawkwood, brigandage in Italy, became strictly monarchical. Theft could not, merely by that dignified form of government, be made a holy manner of life; but it was made both dexterous and decorous. The pages of the English knights under Sir John Hawkwood spent nearly all

their spare time in burnishing the knights' armour, and made it always so bright, that they were called "The White Company." And the notary of Tortona, Azario, tells us of them, that these foragers (*furatores*) "were more expert than any plunderers in Lombardy. They for the most part sleep by day, and watch by night, and have such plans and artifices for taking towns, that never were the like or equal of them witnessed."*

The actual Prussian expedition into France merely differs from Sir John's in Italy by being more generally savage, much less enjoyable, and by its clumsier devices for taking towns; for Sir John had no occasion to burn their libraries. In neither case does the monarchical form of government bestow any Divine right of theft; but it puts the available forces into a convenient form. Even with respect to convenience only, it is not yet determinable by the evidence of history, what is absolutely the best form of government to live under. There are indeed said to be republican villages (towns?) in America, where everybody is civil, honest, and substantially comfortable; but these villages have several unfair advantages—there are no lawyers in them, no town councils, and no parliaments. Such republicanism, if possible on a large scale, would be worth fighting for; though, in my own private mind, I confess I should like to keep a

* Communicated to me by my friend Mr. Rawdon Brown, of Venice, from his yet unpublished work, "The English in Italy in the 14th Century."

few lawyers, for the sake of their wigs, and the faces under them—generally very grand when they are really good lawyers—and for their (unprofessional) talk. Also I should like to have a Parliament, into which people might be elected on condition of their never saying anything about politics, that one might still feel sometimes that one was acquainted with an M.P. In the meantime Parliament is a luxury to the British squire, and an honour to the British manufacturer, which you may leave them to enjoy in their own way; provided only you make them always clearly explain, when they tax you, what they want with your money; and that you understand yourselves, what money is, and how it is got, and what it is good for, and bad for.

These matters I hope to explain to you in this and some following letters; which, among various other reasons, it is necessary that I should write in order that you may make no mistake as to the real economical results of Art teaching, whether in the Universities or elsewhere. I will begin by directing your attention particularly to that point.

The first object of all work—not the principal one, but the first and necessary one—is to get food, clothes, lodging, and fuel.

It is quite possible to have too much of all these things. I know a great many gentlemen, who eat too large dinners; a great many ladies, who have too many clothes. I know there is lodging to spare in London, for I have several houses there myself, which I can't let. And I

know there is fuel to spare everywhere, since we get up steam to pound the roads with, while our men stand idle; or drink till they can't stand, idle, or any otherwise.

Notwithstanding, there is agonizing distress even in this highly favoured England, in some classes, for want of food, clothes, lodging, and fuel. And it has become a popular idea among the benevolent and ingenious, that you may in great part remedy these deficiencies by teaching, to these starving and shivering persons, Science and Art. In their way —as I do not doubt you will believe—I am very fond of both; and I am sure it will be beneficial for the British nation to be lectured upon the merits of Michael Angelo, and the nodes of the moon. But I should strongly object myself to being lectured on either, while I was hungry and cold; and I suppose the same view of the matter would be taken by the greater number of British citizens in those predicaments. So that, I am convinced, their present eagerness for instruction in painting and astronomy proceeds from an impression in their minds that, somehow, they may paint or star-gaze themselves into clothes and victuals. Now it is perfectly true that you may sometimes sell a picture for a thousand pounds; but the chances are greatly against your doing so—much more than the chances of a lottery. In the first place, you must paint a very clever picture; and the chances are greatly against your doing that. In the second place, you must meet with an amiable

picture-dealer; and the chances are somewhat against your doing that. In the third place, the amiable picture-dealer must meet with a fool; and the chances are not always in favour even of his doing that—though, as I gave exactly the sum in question for a picture myself, only the other day, it is not for me to say so. Assume, however, to put the case most favourably, that what with the practical results of the energies of Mr. Cole, at Kensington, and the æsthetic impressions produced by various lectures at Cambridge and Oxford, the profits of art employment might be counted on as a rateable income. Suppose even that the ladies of the richer classes should come to delight no less in new pictures than in new dresses; and that picture-making should thus become as constant and lucrative an occupation as dress-making. Still, you know, they can't buy pictures and dresses too. If they buy two pictures a day, they can't buy two dresses a day; or if they do, they must save in something else. They have but a certain income, be it never so large. They spend that now; and you can't get more out of them. Even if they lay by money, the time comes when somebody must spend it. You will find that they do verily spend now all they have, neither more nor less. If ever they seem to spend more, it is only by running in debt, and not paying; if they for a time spend less, some day the overplus must come into circulation. All they have, they spend; more than that, they cannot at any

time; less than that, they can only for a short time.

Whenever, therefore, any new industry, such as this of picture-making, is invented, of which the profits depend on patronage, it merely means that you have effected a diversion of the current of money in your own favour, and to somebody else's loss. Nothing, really, has been gained by the nation, though probably much time and wit, as well as sundry people's senses, have been lost. Before such a diversion can be effected, a great many kind things must have been done, a great deal of excellent advice given; and an immense quantity of ingenious trouble taken: the arithmetical course of the business throughout being, that for every penny you are yourself better, somebody else is a penny the worse; and the net result of the whole, precisely zero.

Zero, of course, I mean, so far as money is concerned. It may be more dignified for working women to paint than to embroider; and it may be a very charming piece of self-denial, in a young lady, to order a high art fresco instead of a ball-dress; but as far as cakes and ale are concerned, it is all the same,—there is but so much money to be got by you, or spent by her, and not one farthing more, usually a great deal less, by high art than by low. Zero, also, observe, I mean partly in a complimentary sense to the work executed. If you have done no good by painting, at least you have done no serious mischief. A bad picture is indeed a dull thing to have in a house, and in a

certain sense a mischievous thing; but it won't blow the roof off. Whereas, of most things which the English, French, and Germans are paid for making now-a-days,—cartridges, cannon, and the like,—you know the best thing we can possibly hope is that they *may* be useless, and the net result of them, zero.

The thing, therefore, that you have to ascertain approximately, in order to determine on some consistent organization, is the maximum of wages-fund you have to depend on to start with, that is to say, virtually the sum of the income of the gentlemen of England. Do not trouble yourselves at first about France or Germany, or any other foreign country. The principle of free trade is, that French gentlemen should employ English workmen, for whatever the English can do better than the French; and that English gentlemen should employ French workmen, for whatever the French can do better than the English. It is a very right principle, but merely extends the question to a wider field. Suppose, for the present, that France, and every other country but your own, were — what I suppose you would, if you had your way, like them to be—sunk under water, and that England were the only country in the world. Then, how would you live in it most comfortably? Find out that, and you will then easily find how two countries can exist together; or more, not only without need for fighting, but to each other's advantage.

For, indeed, the laws by which two next-door

neighbours might live most happily—the one not being the better for his neighbour's poverty, but the worse, and the better for his neighbour's prosperity—are those also by which it is convenient and wise for two parishes, two provinces, or two kingdoms, to live side by side. And the nature of every commercial and military operation which takes place in Europe, or in the world, may always be best investigated by supposing it limited to the districts of a single country. Kent and Northumberland exchange hops and coals on precisely the same economical principles as Italy and England exchange oil for iron; and the essential character of the war between Germany and France may be best understood by supposing it a dispute between Lancaster and Yorkshire for the line of the Ribble. Suppose that Lancashire, having absorbed Cumberland and Cheshire, and been much insulted and troubled by Yorkshire in consequence, and at last attacked; and having victoriously repulsed the attack, and retaining old grudges against Yorkshire, about the colour of roses, from the fifteenth century, declares that it cannot possibly be safe against the attacks of Yorkshire any longer, unless it gets the townships of Giggleswick and Wigglesworth, and a fortress on Pen-y-gent. Yorkshire replying that this is totally inadmissible, and that it will eat its last horse, and perish to its last Yorkshireman, rather than part with a stone of Giggleswick, a crag of Pen-y-gent, or a ripple of Ribble,—Lancashire with its Cumbrian and Cheshire contingents invades

Yorkshire, and meeting with much Divine assistance, ravages the West Riding, and besieges York on Christmas day. That is the actual gist of the whole business; and in the same manner you may see the downright common sense—if any is to be seen—of other human proceedings, by taking them first under narrow and homely conditions. So, for the present, we will fancy ourselves, what you tell me you all want to be, independent: we will take no account of any other country but Britain; and on that condition I will begin to show you in my next paper how we ought to live, after ascertaining the utmost limits of the wages-fund, which means the income of our gentlemen; that is to say, essentially, the income of those who have command of the land, and therefore of all food.

What you call "wages," practically, is the quantity of food which the possessor of the land gives you, to work for him. There is, finally, no "capital" but that. If all the money of all the capitalists in the whole world were destroyed, the notes and bills burnt, the gold irrecoverably buried, and all the machines and apparatus of manufactures crushed, by a mistake in signals, in one catastrophe; and nothing remained but the land, with its animals and vegetables, and buildings for shelter, — the poorer population would be very little worse off than they are at this instant; and their labour, instead of being "limited" by the destruction, would be greatly stimulated. They would feed themselves from the animals and growing crops;

heap here and there a few tons of ironstone together, build rough walls round them to get a blast, and in a fortnight, they would have iron tools again, and be ploughing and fighting, just as usual. It is only we who had the capital who would suffer; we should not be able to live idle, as we do now, and many of us—I, for instance—should starve at once: but you, though little the worse, would none of you be the better eventually, for our loss—or starvation. The removal of superfluous mouths would indeed benefit you somewhat, for a time; but you would soon replace them with hungrier ones; and there are many of us who are quite worth our meat to you in different ways, which I will explain in due place: also I will show you that our money is really likely to be useful to you in its accumulated form, (besides that, in the instances when it has been won by work, it justly belongs to us,) so only that you are careful never to let us persuade you into borrowing it, and paying us interest for it. You will find a very amusing story, explaining your position in that case, at the 117th page of the 'Manual of Political Economy,' published this year at Cambridge, for your early instruction, in an almost devotionally catechetical form, by Messrs. Macmillan.

Perhaps I had better quote it to you entire: it is taken by the author "from the French."

There was once in a village a poor carpenter, who worked hard from morning to night. One day James

thought to himself, "With my hatchet, saw, and hammer, I can only make coarse furniture, and can only get the pay for such. If I had a plane, I should please my customers more, and they would pay me more. Yes, I am resolved, I will make myself a plane." At the end of ten days, James had in his possession an admirable plane which he valued all the more for having made it himself. Whilst he was reckoning all the profits which he expected to derive from the use of it, he was interrupted by William, a carpenter in the neighbouring village. William, having admired the plane, was struck with the advantages which might be gained from it. He said to James—

"You must do me a service; lend me the plane for a year." As might be expected, James cried out, "How can you think of such a thing, William? Well, if I do you this service, what will you do for me in return?"

*W.* Nothing. Don't you know that a loan ought to be gratuitous?

*J.* I know nothing of the sort; but I do know that if I were to lend you my plane for a year, it would be giving it to you. To tell you the truth, that was not what I made it for.

*W.* Very well, then; I ask you to do me a service; what service do you ask me in return?

*J.* First, then, in a year the plane will be done for. You must therefore give me another exactly like it.

*W.* That is perfectly just. I submit to these conditions. I think you must be satisfied with this, and can require nothing further.

*J.* I think otherwise. I made the plane for myself, and not for you. I expected to gain some advantage from it. I have made the plane for the purpose of improving my work and my condition; if you merely

return it to me in a year, it is you who will gain the profit of it during the whole of that time. I am not bound to do you such a service without receiving anything in return. Therefore, if you wish for my plane, besides the restoration already bargained for, you must give me a new plank as a compensation for the advantages of which I shall be deprived.

These terms were agreed to, but the singular part of it is that at the end of the year, when the plane came into James's possession, he lent it again; recovered it, and lent it a third and fourth time. It has passed into the hands of his son, who still lends it. Let us examine this little story. The plane is the symbol of all capital, and the plank is the symbol of all interest.

If this be an abridgment, what a graceful piece of highly wrought literature the original story must be! I take the liberty of abridging it a little more.

James makes a plane, lends it to William on 1st January for a year. William gives him a plank for the loan of it, wears it out, and makes another for James, which he gives him on 31st December. On 1st January he again borrows the new one; and the arrangement is repeated continuously. The position of William therefore is, that he makes a plane every 31st of December; lends it to James till the next day, and pays James a plank annually for the privilege of lending it to him on that evening. This, in future investigations of capital and interest, we will call, if you please, "the Position of William."

You may not at the first glance see where the fallacy lies (the writer of the story evidently counts on your not seeing it at all).

If James did not lend the plane to William, he could only get his gain of a plank by working with it himself, and wearing it out himself. When he had worn it out at the end of the year, he would, therefore, have to make another for himself. William, working with it instead, gets the advantage instead, which he must, therefore, pay James his plank for; and return to James, what James would, if he had not lent his plane, then have had—not a new plane—but the worn-out one. James must make a new one for himself, as he would have had to do if no William had existed; and if William likes to borrow it again for another plank—all is fair.

That is to say, clearing the story of its nonsense, that James makes a plane annually, and sells it to William for its proper price, which, in kind, is a new plank. But this arrangement has nothing whatever to do with principal or with interest. There are, indeed, many very subtle conditions involved in any sale; one among which is the value of ideas; I will explain that value to you in the course of time; (the article is not one which modern political economists have any familiarity with dealings in;) and I will tell you somewhat also of the real nature of interest; but if you will only get, for the present, a quite clear idea of "the Position of William," it is all I want of you.

I remain, your faithful friend,

JOHN RUSKIN.

## LETTER II

### *THE GREAT PICNIC*

DENMARK HILL,
*1st February*, 1871.

FRIENDS,—

BEFORE going farther, you may like to know, and ought to know, what I mean by the title of these Letters; and why it is in Latin. I can only tell you in part, for the Letters will be on many things, if I am able to carry out my plan in them; and that title means many things, and is in Latin, because I could not have given an English one that meant so many. We, indeed, were not till lately a loquacious people, nor a useless one; but the Romans did more, and said less, than any other nation that ever lived; and their language is the most heroic ever spoken by men.

Therefore I wish you to know, at least, some words of it, and to recognize what thoughts they stand for.

Some day, I hope you may know—and that European workmen may know—many words of it; but even a few will be useful.

Do not smile at my saying so. Of Arithmetic, Geometry, and Chemistry, you can know but little, at the utmost; but that little, well learnt, serves

you well. And a little Latin, well learnt, will serve you also, and in a higher way than any of these.

'Fors' is the best part of three good English words, Force, Fortitude, and Fortune. I wish you to know the meaning of those three words accurately.

'Force' (in humanity), means power of doing good work. A fool, or a corpse, can do any quantity of mischief; but only a wise and strong man, or, with what true vital force there is in him, a weak one, can do good.

'Fortitude' means the power of bearing necessary pain, or trial of patience, whether by time, or temptation.

'Fortune' means the necessary fate of a man: the ordinance of his life which cannot be changed. To 'make your Fortune' is to rule that appointed fate to the best ends of which it is capable.

Fors is a feminine word; and Clavigera, is, therefore, the feminine of 'Claviger.'

Clava means a club. Clavis, a key. Clavus, a nail, or a rudder.

Gero means 'I carry.' It is the root of our word 'gesture' (the way you carry yourself); and, in a curious bye-way, of 'jest.'

Clavigera may mean, therefore, either Club-bearer, Key-bearer, or Nail-bearer.

Each of these three possible meanings of Clavigera corresponds to one of the three meanings of Fors.

Fors, the Club-bearer, means the strength of Hercules, or of Deed.

Fors, the Key-bearer, means the strength of Ulysses, or of Patience.

Fors, the Nail-bearer, means the strength of Lycurgus, or of Law.

I will tell you what you may usefully know of those three Greek persons in a little time. At present, note only of the three powers: 1. That the strength of Hercules is for deed, not misdeed; and that his club—the favourite weapon, also, of the Athenian hero Theseus, whose form is the best inheritance left to us by the greatest of Greek sculptors, (it is in the Elgin room of the British Museum, and I shall have much to tell you of him—especially how he helped Hercules in his utmost need, and how he invented mixed vegetable soup)—was for subduing monsters and cruel persons, and was of olive-wood. 2. That the Second Fors Clavigera is portress at a gate which she cannot open till you have waited long; and that her robe is of the colour of ashes, or dry earth.* 3. That the Third Fors Clavigera, the power of Lycurgus, is Royal as well as Legal; and that the notablest crown yet existing in Europe of any that have been worn by Christian kings, was —people say—made of a Nail.

That is enough about my title, for this time; now to our work. I told you, and you will find it true, that, practically, all wages mean the food and lodging given you by the possessors of the land.

It begins to be asked on many sides how the

* See Carey's translation of the ninth book of Dante's 'Purgatory,' line 105.

possessors of the land became possessed of it, and why they should still possess it, more than you or I; and Ricardo's 'Theory' of Rent, though, for an economist, a very creditably ingenious work of fiction, will not much longer be imagined to explain the 'Practice' of Rent.

The true answer, in this matter, as in all others, is the best. Some land has been bought; some, won by cultivation: but the greater part, in Europe, seized originally by force of hand.

You may think, in that case, you would be justified in trying to seize some yourselves, in the same way.

If you could, you, and your children, would only hold it by the same title as its present holders. If it is a bad one, you had better not so hold it; if a good one, you had better let the present holders alone.

And in any case, it is expedient that you should do so, for the present holders, whom we may generally call 'Squires' (a title having three meanings, like Fors, and all good; namely, Rider, Shield-bearer, and Carver), are quite the best men you can now look to for leading: it is too true that they have much demoralized themselves lately by horse-racing, bird-shooting, and vermin-hunting; and most of all by living in London, instead of on their estates; but they are still (without exception) brave; nearly without exception, good-natured; honest, so far as they understand honesty; and much to be depended on, if once you and they understand each other.

Which you are far enough now from doing; and it is imminently needful that you should: so we will have an accurate talk of them soon. The needfullest thing of all first is that you should know the functions of the persons whom you are being taught to think of as your protectors against the Squires;—your 'Employers,' namely; or Capitalist Supporters of Labour.

'Employers.' It is a noble title. If, indeed, they have found you idle, and given you employment, wisely,—let us no more call them mere 'Men' of Business, but rather 'Angels' of Business: quite the best sort of Guardian Angel.

Yet are you sure it is necessary, absolutely, to look to superior natures for employment? Is it inconceivable that you should employ—yourselves? I ask the question, because these Seraphic beings, undertaking also to be Seraphic Teachers or Doctors, have theories about employment which may perhaps be true in their own celestial regions, but are inapplicable under worldly conditions.

To one of these principles, announced by themselves as highly important, I must call your attention closely, because it has of late been the cause of much embarrassment among persons in a subseraphic life. I take its statement verbatim, from the 25th page of the Cambridge catechism before quoted:

"This brings us to a most important proposition respecting capital, one which it is essential that the student should thoroughly understand.

"The proposition is this—A demand for commodities is not a demand for labour.

"The demand for labour depends upon the amount of capital: the demand for commodities simply determines in what direction labour shall be employed.

"An example.—The truth of these assertions can best be shown by examples. Let us suppose that a manufacturer of woollen cloth is in the habit of spending £50 annually in lace. What does it matter, say some, whether he spends this £50 in lace or whether he uses it to employ more labourers in his own business? Does not the £50 spent in lace maintain the labourers who make the lace, just the same as it would maintain the labourers who make cloth, if the manufacturer used the money in extending his own business? If he ceased buying the lace, for the sake of employing more cloth-makers, would there not be simply a transfer of the £50 from the lace-makers to the cloth-makers? In order to find the right answer to these questions, let us imagine what would actually take place if the manufacturer ceased buying the lace, and employed the £50 in paying the wages of an additional number of cloth-makers. The lace manufacturer, in consequence of the diminished demand for lace, would diminish the production, and would withdraw from his business an amount of capital corresponding to the diminished demand. As there is no reason to suppose that the lace-maker would, on losing some of his custom, become more extravagant, or would cease to desire to derive income from the capital which the diminished demand has caused him to withdraw from his own business, it may be assumed that he would invest this capital in some other industry. This capital is not the same as that which his former customer, the woollen cloth manufacturer, is now paying his own labourers with;

it is a second capital; and in the place of £50 employed in maintaining labour, there is now £100 so employed. There is no transfer from lace-makers to cloth-makers. There is fresh employment for the cloth-makers, and a transfer from the lace-makers to some other labourers."—*Principles of Political Economy*, vol. i., p. 102.

This is very fine; and it is clear that we may carry forward the improvement in our commercial arrangements by recommending all the other customers of the lace-maker to treat him as the cloth-maker has done. Whereupon he of course leaves the lace business entirely, and uses all his capital in 'some other industry.' Having thus established the lace-maker with a complete 'second capital,' in the other industry, we will next proceed to develope a capital out of the cloth-maker, by recommending all *his* customers to leave *him*. Whereupon, he will also invest his capital in 'some other industry,' and we have a Third capital, employed in the National benefit.

We will now proceed in the round of all possible businesses, developing a correspondent number of new capitals, till we come back to our friend the lace-maker again, and find him employed in whatever his new industry was. By now taking away again all his new customers, we begin the development of another order of Capitals in a higher Seraphic circle —and so develope at last an Infinite Capital!

It would be difficult to match this for simplicity; it is more comic even than the fable of James and William, though you may find it less easy to detect

the fallacy here; but the obscurity is not because the error is less gross, but because it is threefold. Fallacy 1st is the assumption that a cloth-maker may employ any number of men, whether he has customers or not; while a lace-maker must dismiss his men if he has not customers. Fallacy 2nd: That when a lace-maker can no longer find customers for lace, he can always find customers for something else. Fallacy 3rd (the essential one): That the funds provided by these new customers, produced seraphically from the clouds, are a 'second capital.' Those customers, if they exist now, existed before the lace-maker adopted his new business; and were the employers of the people in that business. If the lace-maker gets them, he merely diverts their fifty pounds from the tradesmen they were before employing, to himself; and that is Mr. Mill's 'second capital.'

Underlying these three fallacies, however, there is, in the mind of 'the greatest thinker in England,' some consciousness of a partial truth, which he has never yet been able to define for himself—still less to explain to others. The real root of them is his conviction that it is beneficial and profitable to make broadcloth; and unbeneficial and unprofitable to make lace;* so that the trade of cloth-making

* I assume the Cambridge quotation to be correct: in my old edition (1848), the distinction is between 'weavers and lace-makers' and 'journeymen bricklayers;' and making velvet is considered to be the production of a 'commodity,' but building a house only doing a 'service.'

should be infinitely extended, and that of lace-making infinitely repressed. Which is, indeed, partially true. Making cloth, if it be well made, is a good industry; and if you had sense enough to read your Walter Scott thoroughly, I should invite you to join me in sincere hope that Glasgow might in that industry long flourish; and the chief hostelry at Aberfoil be at the sign of the "Nicol Jarvie." Also, of lace-makers, it is often true that they had better be doing something else. I admit it, with no goodwill, for I know a most kind lady, a clergyman's wife, who devotes her life to the benefit of her country by employing lace-makers; and all her friends make presents of collars and cuffs to each other, for the sake of charity; and as, if they did not, the poor girl lace-makers would probably indeed be 'diverted' into some other less diverting industry, in due assertion of the rights of women, (cartridge-filling, or percussion-cap making, most likely,) I even go the length, sometimes, of furnishing my friend with a pattern, and never say a word to disturb her young customers in their conviction that it is an act of Christian charity to be married in more than ordinarily expensive veils.

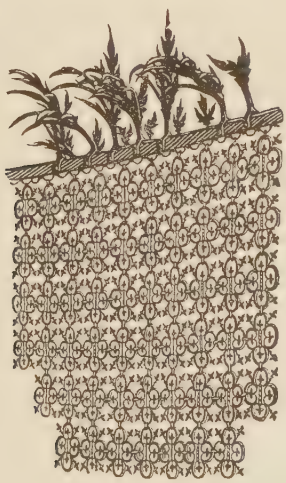
But there *is* one kind of lace for which I should be glad that the demand ceased. Iron lace. If we must even doubt whether ornamental thread-work may be, wisely, made on cushions in the sunshine, by dexterous fingers for fair shoulders,—how are we to think of Ornamental Iron-work, made with deadly

sweat of men, and steady waste, all summer through, of the coals that Earth gave us for winter fuel? What shall we say of labour spent on lace such as that?

Nay, says the Cambridge catechism, "the demand for commodities is not a demand for labour."

Doubtless, in the economist's new earth, cast iron will be had for asking: the hapless and brave Parisians find it even rain occasionally out of the new economical Heavens, *without* asking. Gold will also one day, perhaps, be begotten of gold, until the supply of that, as well as of iron, may be, at least, equal to the demand. But, in this world, it is not so yet. Neither thread-lace, gold-lace, iron-lace, nor stone-lace, whether they be commodities or incommodities, can be had for nothing. How much, think you, did the gilded flourishes cost round the gas-lamps on Westminster Bridge? or the stone-lace of the pinnacles of the temple of Parliament at the end of it, (incommodious enough, as I hear;) or the point-lace of the park-railings which you so improperly pulled down, when you wanted to be Parliamentary yourselves; (much good you would have got of that!) or the 'openwork' of iron railings generally—the special glories of English design? Will you count the cost, in labour and coals, of the blank bars ranged along all the melancholy miles of our suburban streets, saying with their rusty tongues, as plainly as iron tongues can speak, "Thieves outside, and nothing to steal within." A beautiful wealth they are! and a productive capital!

"Well, but," you answer, "the making them was work for us." Of course it was; is not that the very thing I am telling you? Work it was; and too much. But will you be good enough to make up your minds, once for all, whether it is really work that you want, or rest? I thought you rather objected to your quantity of work;—that you were all for having eight hours of it instead of ten? You may have twelve instead of ten, easily,—sixteen, if you like! If it is only occupation you want, why do you cast the iron? Forge it in the fresh air, on a workman's anvil; make iron-lace like this of Verona,—



every link of it swinging loose like a knight's

chain mail: then you may have some joy of it afterwards, and pride; and say you knew the cunning of a man's right hand. But I think it is pay that you want, not work; and it is very true that pretty iron-work like that does not pay; but it *is* pretty, and it might even be entertaining, if you made those leaves at the top of it (which are, as far as I can see, only artichoke, and not very well done) in the likeness of all the beautiful leaves you could find, till you knew them all by heart. "Wasted time and hammer-strokes," say you? "A wise people like the English will have nothing but spikes; and, besides, the spikes are highly needful, so many of the wise people being thieves." Yes, that is so; and, therefore, in calculating the annual cost of keeping your thieves, you must always reckon, not only the cost of the spikes that keep them in, but of the spikes that keep them out. But how if, instead of flat rough spikes, you put triangular polished ones, commonly called bayonets; and instead of the perpendicular bars, put perpendicular men? What is the cost to you then, of your railing, of which you must feed the idle bars daily? Costly enough, if it stays quiet. But how, if it begin to march and countermarch? and apply its spikes horizontally?

And now note this that follows; it is of vital importance to you.

There are, practically, two absolutely opposite kinds of labour going on among men, for ever.*

* I do not mean that there are no other kinds, nor that well-paid

The first, labour supported by Capital, producing nothing.

The second, labour unsupported by Capital, producing all things.

Take two simple and precise instances on a small scale.

A little while since, I was paying a visit in Ireland, and chanced to hear an account of the pleasures of a picnic party, who had gone to see a waterfall. There was of course ample lunch, feasting on the grass, and basketsful of fragments taken up afterwards.

Then the company, feeling themselves dull, gave the fragments that remained to the attendant ragged boys, on condition that they should 'pull each other's hair.'

Here, you see, is, in the most accurate sense, employment of food, or capital, in the support of entirely unproductive labour.

Next, for the second kind. I live at the top of a short but rather steep hill; at the bottom of which, every day, all the year round, but especially in frost, coal-waggons get stranded, being economically provided with the smallest number of horses that can get them along on level ground.

The other day, when the road, frozen after thaw,

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labour must necessarily be unproductive. I hope to see much done, some day, for just pay, and wholly productive. But these, named in the text, are the two opposite extremes; and, in actual life, hitherto, the largest means have been usually spent in mischief, and the most useful work done for the worst pay.

was at the worst, my assistant, the engraver of that bit of iron-work on the 29th page, was coming up here, and found three coal-waggons at a lock, helpless; the drivers, as usual, explaining Political Economy to the horses, by beating them over the heads.

There were half a dozen fellows besides, out of work, or not caring to be in it—standing by, looking on. My engraver put his shoulder to a wheel, (at least his hand to a spoke,) and called on the idlers to do as much. They didn't seem to have thought of such a thing, but were ready enough when called on. "And we went up screaming," said Mr. Burgess.

Do you suppose that was one whit less proper human work than going up a hill against a battery, merely because, in that case, half of the men would have gone down, screaming, instead of up; and those who got up would have done no good at the top?

But observe the two opposite kinds of labour. The first lavishly supported by Capital, and producing Nothing. The second, unsupported by any Capital whatsoever,—not having so much as a stick for a tool,—but called, by mere goodwill, out of the vast void of the world's Idleness, and producing the definitely profitable result of moving a weight of fuel some distance towards the place where it was wanted, and sparing the strength of overloaded creatures.

Observe further. The labour producing no useful result was demoralizing. All such labour is.

The labour producing useful result was educational in its influence on the temper. All such labour is.

And the first condition of education, the thing you are all crying out for, is being put to wholesome and useful work. And it is nearly the last condition of it, too; you need very little more; but, as things go, there will yet be difficulty in getting that. As things have hitherto gone, the difficulty has been to avoid getting the reverse of that.

For, during the last eight hundred years, the upper classes of Europe have been one large Picnic Party. Most of them have been religious also; and in sitting down, by companies, upon the green grass, in parks, gardens, and the like, have considered themselves commanded into that position by Divine authority, and fed with bread from Heaven: of which they duly considered it proper to bestow the fragments in support, and the tithes in tuition, of the poor.

But, without even such small cost, they might have taught the poor many beneficial things. In some places they *have* taught them manners, which is already much. They might have cheaply taught them merriment also:—dancing and singing, for instance. The young English ladies who sit nightly to be instructed, themselves, at some cost, in melodies illustrative of the consumption of La Traviata, and the damnation of Don Juan, might have taught every girl peasant in England to join in costless choirs of innocent song. Here and there, perhaps, a gentleman might have been found able to teach his

peasantry some science and art. Science and fine art don't pay; but they cost little. Tithes—not of the income of the country, but of the income, say, of its brewers—nay, probably the sum devoted annually by England to provide drugs for the adulteration of its own beer,—would have founded lovely little museums, and perfect libraries, in every village. And if here and there an English churchman had been found (such as Dean Stanley) willing to explain to peasants the sculpture of his and their own cathedral, and to read its black-letter inscriptions for them; and, on warm Sundays, when they were too sleepy to attend to anything more proper—to tell them a story about some of the people who had built it, or lay buried in it—we perhaps might have been quite as religious as we are, and yet need not now have been offering prizes for competition in art schools, nor lecturing with tender sentiment on the inimitableness of the works of Fra Angelico.

These things the great Picnic Party might have taught without cost, and with amusement to themselves. One thing, at least, they were bound to teach, whether it amused them or not;—how, day by day, the daily bread they expected their village children to pray to God for, might be earned in accordance with the laws of God. *This* they might have taught, not only without cost, but with great gain. One thing only they *have* taught, and at considerable cost.

They have spent four hundred millions * of pounds

* £992,740,328, in seventeen years, say the working men of Burnley, in their address just issued—an excellent address in its

here in England within the last twenty years!—how much in France and Germany, I will take some pains to ascertain for you,—and with this initial outlay of capital, have taught the peasants of Europe —to pull each other's hair.

With *this* result, 17th January, 1871, at and around the chief palace of their own pleasures, and the chief city of their delights:

"Each demolished house has its own legend of sorrow, of pain, and horror; each vacant doorway speaks to the eye, and almost to the ear, of hasty flight, as armies or fire came—of weeping women and trembling children running away in awful fear, abandoning the home that saw their birth, the old house they loved—of startled men seizing quickly under each arm their most valued goods, and rushing, heavily laden, after their wives and babes, leaving to hostile hands the task of burning all the rest. When evening falls, the wretched outcasts, worn with fatigue and tears, reach Versailles, St. Germain, or some other place outside the range of fire, and there they beg for bread and shelter, homeless, foodless, broken with despair. And this, remember, has been the fate of something like a hundred thousand people during the last four months. Versailles alone has about fifteen thousand such fugitives to keep alive, all ruined, all hopeless, all vaguely asking the grim future what still worse fate it may have in store for them."—*Daily Telegraph*, Jan. 17th, 1871.

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way, and full of very fair arithmetic—if its facts are all right; only I don't see, myself, how, "from fifteen to twenty-five millions per annum," make nine hundred and ninety-two millions in seventeen years.

That is the result round their pleasant city, and *this* within their industrious and practical one: let us keep, for the reference of future ages, a picture of domestic life, out of the streets of London in her commercial prosperity, founded on the eternal laws of Supply and Demand, as applied by the modern Capitalist:

"A father in the last stage of consumption—two daughters nearly marriageable with hardly sufficient rotting clothing to 'cover their shame.' The rags that hang around their attenuated frames flutter in strips against their naked legs. They have no stool or chair upon which they can sit. Their father occupies the only stool in the room. They have no employment by which they can earn even a pittance. They are at home starving on a half-chance meal a day, and hiding their raggedness from the world. The walls are bare, there is one bed in the room, and a bundle of dirty rags are upon it. The dying father will shortly follow the dead mother; and when the parish coffin encloses his wasted form, and a pauper's grave closes above him, what shall be his daughters' lot? This is but a type of many other homes in the district: dirt, misery, and disease alone flourish in that wretched neighbourhood. 'Fever and smallpox rage,' as the inhabitants say, 'next door, and next door, and over the way, and next door to that, and further down.' The living, dying, and dead are all huddled together. The houses have no ventilation, the back yards are receptacles for all sorts of filth and rubbish, the old barrels or vessels that contain the supply of water are thickly coated on the sides with slime, and there is an undisturbed deposit of mud at the bottom. There is no mortuary house—the dead lie in the dogholes

where they breathed their last, and add to the contagion which spreads through the neighbourhood."—*Pall Mall Gazette*, January 7th, 1871, quoting the *Builder*.

As I was revising this sheet,—on the evening of the 20th of last month,—two slips of paper were brought to me. One contained, in consecutive paragraphs, an extract from the speech of one of the best and kindest of our public men, to the 'Liberal Association' at Portsmouth; and an account of the performances of the 35-ton gun called the 'Woolwich infant,' which is fed with 700-pound shot, and 130 pounds of gunpowder at one mouthful; not at all like the Wapping infants, starving on a half-chance meal a day. "The gun was fired with the most satisfactory result," nobody being hurt, and nothing damaged but the platform, while the shot passed through the screens in front at the rate of 1,303 feet per second: and it seems, also, that the Woolwich infant has not seen the light too soon. For Mr. Cowper-Temple, in the preceding paragraph, informs the Liberals of Portsmouth, that in consequence of our amiable neutrality "we must contemplate the contingency of a combined fleet coming from the ports of Prussia, Russia, and America, and making an attack on England."

Contemplating myself these relations of Russia, Prussia, Woolwich, and Wapping, it seems to my uncommercial mind merely like another case of iron railings—thieves outside, and nothing to steal within. But the second slip of paper announced approaching help in a peaceful direction. It was the prospectus of

the Boardmen's and General Advertising Co-operative Society, which invites, from the "generosity of the public, a necessary small preliminary sum," and, "in addition to the above, a small sum of money by way of capital," to set the members of the society up in the profitable business of walking about London between two boards. Here *is* at last found for us, then, it appears, a line of life! At the West End, lounging about the streets, with a well-made back to one's coat, and front to one's shirt, is usually thought of as not much in the way of business; but, doubtless, to lounge at the East End about the streets, with one Lie pinned to the front of you, and another to the back of you, will pay, in time, only with proper preliminary expenditure of capital. My friends, I repeat my question: Do you not think you could contrive some little method of employing —yourselves? for truly I think the Seraphic Doctors are nearly at their wits' end (if ever their wits had a beginning). Tradesmen are beginning to find it difficult to live by lies of their own; and workmen will not find it much easier to live, by walking about, flattened between other people's.

Think over it. On the first of March, I hope to ask you to read a little history with me; perhaps also, because the world's time, seen truly, is but one long and fitful April, in which every day is All Fools' day,—we may continue our studies in that month; but on the first of May, you shall consider with me what you can do, or let me, if still living, tell you what I know you can do—those of you, at

least, who will promise—(with the help of the three strong Fates), these three things:

1. To do your own work well, whether it be for life or death.

2. To help other people at theirs, when you can, and seek to avenge no injury.

3. To be sure you can obey good laws before you seek to alter bad ones.

Believe me,

Your faithful friend,

JOHN RUSKIN.

## LETTER III

*RICHARD OF ENGLAND*

DENMARK HILL,
*1st March*, 1871.

MY FRIENDS,

WE are to read—with your leave—some history to-day; the leave, however, will perhaps not willingly be given, for you may think that of late you have read enough history, or too much, in *Gazettes* of morning and evening. No; you have read, and can read, no history in these. Reports of daily events, yes;—and if any journal would limit itself to statements of well-sifted fact, making itself not a "news"paper, but an "olds"paper, and giving its statements tested and true, like old wine, as soon as things could be known accurately; choosing also, of the many things that might be known, those which it was most vital to know, and summing them in few words of pure English,—I cannot say whether it would ever pay well to sell it; but I am sure it would pay well to read it, and to read no other.

But even so, to know only what was happening day by day, would not be to read history. What happens now is but the momentary scene of a great play, of which you can understand nothing without

some knowledge of the former action. And of that, so great a play is it, you can at best understand little; yet of history, as of science, a little, well known, will serve you much, and a little, ill known, will do you fatally the contrary of service.

For instance, all your journals will be full of talk, for months to come, about whose fault the war was; and you yourselves, as you begin to feel its deadly recoil on your own interests, or as you comprehend better the misery it has brought on others, will be looking about more and more restlessly for some one to accuse of it. That is because you don't know the law of Fate, nor the course of history. It is the law of Fate that we shall live, in part, by our own efforts, but in the greater part, by the help of others; and that we shall also die, in part, for our own faults; but in the greater part for the faults of others. Do you suppose (to take the thing on the small scale in which you can test it) that those seven children torn into pieces out of their sleep, in the last night of the siege of Paris,* had sinned above all the children in Paris, or above yours? or that their parents had sinned more than you? Do you think the thousands of soldiers, German and French, who have died in agony, and of women who have died of grief, had sinned above all other soldiers, or mothers, or girls, there and here?

It was not their fault, but their Fate. The thing appointed to them by the Third Fors. But you think it was at least the Emperor Napoleon's fault,

* *Daily Telegraph*, 30th January, 1871.

if not theirs? Or Count Bismarck's? No; not at all. The Emperor Napoleon had no more to do with it than a cork on the top of a wave has with the toss of the sea. Count Bismarck had very little to do with it. When the Count sent for my waiter, last July, in the village of Lauterbrunnen, among the Alps,—that the waiter then and there packed his knapsack and departed, to be shot, if need were, leaving my dinner unserved (as has been the case with many other people's dinners since)—depended on things much anterior to Count Bismarck. The two men who had most to answer for in the mischief of the matter were St. Louis and his brother, who lived in the middle of the thirteenth century. One, among the very best of men; and the other, of all that I ever read of, the worst. The good man, living in mistaken effort, and dying miserably, to the ruin of his country; the bad man living in triumphant good fortune, and dying peaceably, to the ruin of many countries. Such were their Fates, and ours. I am not going to tell you of them, nor anything about the French war to-day; and you have been told, long ago, (only you would not listen, nor believe,) the root of the modern German power—in that rough father of Frederick, who "yearly made his country richer, and this not in money alone (which is of very uncertain value, and sometimes has no value at all, and even less), but in frugality, diligence, punctuality, veracity,—the grand fountains from which money, and all real *values* and valours, spring for men. As a Nation's *Husband*, he seeks his fellow among Kings, ancient and modern.

Happy the nation which gets such a Husband, once in the half thousand years. The Nation, as foolish wives and Nations do, repines and grudges a good deal, its weak whims and will being thwarted very often; but it advances steadily, with consciousness or not, in the way of well-doing; and, after long times, the harvest of this diligent sowing becomes manifest to the Nation, and to all Nations."*

No such harvest is sowing for you,—Freemen and Independent Electors of Parliamentary representatives, as you think yourselves.

Freemen, indeed! You are slaves, not to masters of any strength or honour; but to the idlest talkers at that floral end of Westminster bridge. Nay, to countless meaner masters than they. For though, indeed, as early as the year 1102, it was decreed in a council at St. Peter's, Westminster, "that no man for the future should presume to carry on the wicked trade of selling men in the markets, like brute beasts, which hitherto hath been the common custom of England," the no less wicked trade of *under*-selling men in markets has lasted to this day; producing conditions of slavery differing from the ancient ones only in being starved instead of full-fed: and besides this, a state of slavery unheard of among the nations till now, has arisen with us. In all former slaveries, Egyptian, Algerine, Saxon, and American, the slave's complaint has been of compulsory *work*. But the modern Politico-Economic slave is a new and far

* Carlyle's *Frederick*, Book IV., chap. iii.

more injured species, condemned to Compulsory *Idleness*, for fear he should spoil other people's trade; the beautifully logical condition of the national Theory of Economy in this matter being that, if you are a shoemaker, it is a law of Heaven that you must sell your goods under their price, in order to destroy the trade of other shoemakers; but if you are not a shoemaker, and are going shoeless and lame, it is a law of Heaven that you must not cut yourself a bit of cowhide, to put between your foot and the stones, because that would interfere with the total trade of shoemaking.

Which theory, of all the wonderful—!

* * * * *

We will wait till April to consider of it; meantime, here is a note I have received from Mr. Alsager A. Hill, who having been unfortunately active in organizing that new effort in the advertising business, designed, as it seems, on this loveliest principle of doing nothing that will be perilously productive—was hurt by my manner of mention of it in the last number of *Fors*. I offered accordingly to print any form of remonstrance he would furnish me with, if laconic enough; and he writes to me, "The intention of the Boardmen's Society is not, as the writer of *Fors Clavigera* suggests, to 'find a line of life' for able-bodied labourers, but simply, by means of co-operation, to give them the fullest benefit of their labour whilst they continue a very humble but still remunerative calling. See Rule 12. The capital asked for to start the organization is essential in all

industrial partnerships, and in so poor a class of labour as that of street board-carrying could not be supplied by the men themselves. With respect to the 'lies' alleged to be carried in front and behind, it is rather hard measure to say that mere announcements of public meetings or places of entertainments (of which street notices chiefly consist) are necessarily falsehoods."

To which, I have only to reply that I never said the newly-found line of life was meant for able-bodied persons. The distinction between able and unable-bodied men is entirely indefinite. There are all degrees of ability for all things; and a man who can do anything, however little, should be made to do that little usefully. If you can carry about a board with a bill on it, you can carry, not about, but where it is wanted, a board *without* a bill on it; which is a much more useful exercise of your ability. Respecting the general probity, and historical or descriptive accuracy, of advertisements, and their function in modern economy, I will inquire in another place. You see I use none for this book, and shall in future use none for any of my books; having grave objection even to the very small minority of advertisements which are approximately true. I am correcting this sheet in the "Crown and Thistle" inn at Abingdon, and under my window is a shrill-voiced person, slowly progressive, crying, "Soles, three pair for a shillin'." In a market regulated by reason and order, instead of demand and supply, the soles would neither have been kept

long enough to render such advertisement of them necessary, nor permitted, after their inexpedient preservation, to be advertised.

Of all attainable liberties, then, be sure first to strive for leave to be useful. Independence you had better cease to talk of, for you are dependent not only on every act of people whom you never heard of, who are living round you, but on every past act of what has been dust for a thousand years. So also, does the course of a thousand years to come, depend upon the little perishing strength that is in you.

Little enough, and perishing, often without reward, however well spent. Understand that. Virtue does not consist in doing what will be presently paid, or even paid at all, to you, the virtuous person. It may so chance; or may not. It will be paid, some day; but the vital condition of it, as virtue, is that it shall be content in its own deed, and desirous rather that the pay of it, if any, should be for others; just as it is also the vital condition of vice to be content in its own deed, and desirous that the pay thereof, if any, should be to others.

You have probably heard of St. Louis before now: and perhaps also that he built the Sainte Chapelle of Paris, of which you may have seen that I wrote the other day to the *Telegraph*, as being the most precious piece of Gothic in Northern Europe; but you are not likely to have known that the spire of it was Tenterden steeple over again, and the cause of fatal sands many, quick, and slow, and above all, of

the running of these in the last hour-glass of France; for that spire, and others like it, subordinate, have acted ever since as lightning-rods, in a reverse manner; carrying, not the fire of heaven innocently to earth, but electric fire of earth innocently to heaven, leaving us all, down here, cold. The best virtue and heart-fire of France (not to say of England, who building her towers for the most part with four pinnacles instead of one, in a somewhat quadrumanous type, finds them less apt as conductors), have spent themselves for these past six centuries in running up those steeples and off them, nobody knows where, leaving a "holy Republic" as residue at the bottom; helpless, clay-cold, and croaking, a habitation of frogs, which poor Garibaldi fights for, vainly raging against the ghost of St. Louis.

It is of English ghosts, however, that I would fain tell you somewhat to-day; of them, and of the land they haunt, and know still for theirs. For hear this to begin with:—

"While a map of France or Germany in the eleventh century is useless for modern purposes, and looks like the picture of another region, a map of England proper in the reign of Victoria hardly differs at all from a map of England proper in the reign of William" (the Conqueror). So says, very truly, Mr. Freeman in his *History of the Conquest.* Are there any of you who care for this *old* England, of which the map has remained unchanged for so long? I believe you would care more for her, and less for yourselves, except as her faithful children,

if you knew a little more about her; and especially more of what she has been. The difficulty, indeed, at any time, is in finding out what she has been; for that which people usually call her history is not hers at all; but that of her Kings, or the tax-gatherers employed by them, which is as if people were to call Mr. Gladstone's history, or Mr. Lowe's, yours and mine.

But the history even of her Kings is worth reading. You remember, I said, that sometimes in church it might keep you awake to be told a little of it. For a simple instance, you have heard probably of Absalom's rebellion against his father, and of David's agony at his death, until from very weariness you have ceased to feel the power of the story. You would not feel it less vividly if you knew that a far more fearful sorrow, of the like kind, had happened to one of your own Kings, perhaps the best we have had, take him for all in all. Not one only, but three of his sons, rebelled against *him*, and were urged into rebellion by their mother. The Prince, who should have been King after him, was pardoned, not once, but many times —pardoned wholly, with rejoicing over him as over the dead alive, and set at his father's right hand in the kingdom; but all in vain. Hard and treacherous to the heart's core, nothing wins him, nothing warns, nothing binds. He flies to France, and wars at last alike against father and brother, till, falling sick through mingled guilt, and shame, and rage, he repents idly as the fever-fire withers him. His

father sends him the signet ring from his finger in token of one more forgiveness. The Prince lies down upon a heap of ashes with a halter round his neck, and so dies. When his father heard it he fainted away three times, and then broke out into bitterest crying and tears. This, you would have thought enough for the Third dark Fate to have appointed for a man's sorrows. It was little to that which was to come. His second son, who was now his Prince of England, conspired against him, and pursued his father from city to city, in Norman France. At last, even his youngest son, best beloved of all, abandoned him, and went over to his enemies.

This was enough. Between him and his children Heaven commanded its own peace. He sickened and died of grief on the 6th of July, 1189.

The son who had killed him, "repented" now; but there could be no signet ring sent to him. Perhaps the dead do not forgive. Men say, as he stood by his father's corpse, that the blood burst from his nostrils. One child only had been faithful to him, but he was the son of a girl whom he had loved much, and as he should not; his Queen, therefore, being a much older person, and strict upon proprieties, poisoned her; nevertheless poor Rosamond's son never failed him; won a battle for him in England, which, in all human probability, saved his kingdom; and was made a bishop, and turned out a bishop of the best.

You know already a little about the Prince who

stood unforgiven (as it seemed) by his father's body. He, also, had to forgive, in his time; but only a stranger's arrow shot—not those reversed "arrows in the hand of the giant," by which his father died. Men called him "Lion-heart," not untruly; and the English, as a people, have prided themselves somewhat ever since on having, every man of them, the heart of a lion; without inquiring particularly either what sort of heart a lion has, or whether to have the heart of a lamb might not sometimes be more to the purpose. But it so happens that the name was very justly given to this prince; and I want you to study his character somewhat, with me, because in all our history there is no truer representative of one great species of the British squire, under all the three significances of the name; for this Richard of ours was beyond most of his fellows, a Rider and a Shieldbearer; and beyond all men of his day, a Carver; and in disposition and *un*reasonable exercise of intellectual power, typically a Squire altogether.

Note of him first, then, that he verily desired the good of his people (provided it could be contrived without any check of his own humour), and that he saw his way to it a great deal clearer than any of your squires do now. Here are some of his laws for you:—

"Having set forth the great inconveniences arising from the diversity of weights and measures in different parts of the kingdom, he, by a law, commanded all measures of corn, and other dry goods,

as also of liquors, to be exactly the same in all his dominions; and that the rim of each of these measures should be a circle of iron. By another law, he commanded all cloth to be woven two yards in breadth within the lists, and of equal goodness in all parts; and that all cloth which did not answer this description should be seized and burnt. He enacted, further, that all the coin of the kingdom should be exactly of the same weight and fineness;—that no Christian should take any interest for money lent; and, to prevent the extortions of the Jews, he commanded that all compacts between Christians and Jews should be made in the presence of witnesses, and the conditions of them put in writing." So, you see, in Cœur-de-Lion's day, it was not esteemed of absolute necessity to put agreements between *Christians* in writing! Which if it were not now, you know we might save a great deal of money, and discharge some of our workmen round Temple Bar, as well as from Woolwich Dockyards. Note that bit about interest of money also for future reference. In the next place observe that this King had great objection to thieves—at least to any person whom he clearly comprehended to be a thief. He was the inventor of a mode of treatment which I believe the Americans—among whom it has not fallen altogether into disuse—do not gratefully enough recognize as a Monarchical institution. By the last of the laws for the government of his fleet in his expedition to Palestine, it is decreed,—"That whosoever is convicted of theft shall have his head shaved, melted

pitch poured upon it, and the feathers from a pillow shaken over it, that he may be known; and shall be put on shore on the first land which the ship touches." And not only so; he even objected to any theft by misrepresentation or deception,—for being evidently particularly interested, like Mr. Mill, in that cloth manufacture, and having made the above law about the breadth of the web, which has caused it to be spoken of ever since as "Broad Cloth," and besides, for better preservation of its breadth, enacted that the Ell shall be of the same length all over the kingdom, and that it shall be made of iron—(so that Mr. Tennyson's provision for National defences—that every shop-boy should strike with his cheating yard-wand home, would be mended much by the substitution of King Richard's *honest* ell-wand, and for once with advisable encouragement to the iron trade)—King Richard finally declares—"That it shall be of the same goodness in the middle as at the sides, and that no merchant in any part of the kingdom of England shall stretch before his shop or booth a red or black cloth, or any other thing by which the sight of buyers is frequently deceived in the choice of good cloth."

These being Richard's rough and unreasonable, chancing nevertheless, being wholly honest, to be wholly right, notions of business, the next point you are to note in him is his unreasonable good humour; an eminent character of English Squires; a very loveable one; and available to himself and

others in many ways, but not altogether so exemplary as many think it. If you are unscrupulously resolved, whenever you can get your own way, to take it; if you are in a position of life wherein you can get a good deal of it, and if you have pugnacity enough to enjoy fighting with anybody who will not give it to you, there is little reason why you should ever be out of humour, unless indeed your way is a broad one, wherein you are like to be opposed in force. Richard's way was a very narrow one. To be first in battle, (generally obtaining that main piece of his will without question; once only worsted, by a French knight, and then, not at all good-humouredly;) to be first in recognized command—therefore contending with his father, who was both in wisdom and acknowledged place superior; but scarcely contending at all with his brother John, who was as definitely and deeply beneath him; good-humoured unreasonably, while he was killing his father, the best of kings, and letting his brother rule unresisted, who was among the worst; and only proposing for his object in life to enjoy himself everywhere in a chivalrous, poetical, and pleasantly animal manner, as a strong man always may. What should he have been out of humour for? That he brightly and bravely lived through his captivity is much indeed to his honour; but it was his point of honour to be bright and brave; not at all to take care of his kingdom. A king who cared for that, would have got thinner and sadder in prison.

And it remains true of the English squire to this day, that, for the most part, he thinks that his kingdom is given him that he may be bright and brave; and not at all that the sunshine or valour in him is meant to be of use to his kingdom.

But the next point you have to note in Richard is indeed a very noble quality, and true English; he always does as much of his work as he can with his own hands. He was not in any wise a king who would sit by a windmill to watch his son and his men at work, though brave kings have done so. As much as might be, of whatever had to be done, he would stedfastly do from his own shoulder; his main tool being an old Greek one, and the working God Vulcan's—the clearing axe. When that was no longer needful, and nothing would serve but spade and trowel, still the king was foremost; and after the weary retreat to Ascalon, when he found the place "so completely ruined and deserted, that it afforded neither food, lodging nor protection," nor any other sort of capital,—forthwith, 20th January, 1192—his army and he set to work to repair it; a three months' business, of incessant toil, "from which the king himself was not exempted, but wrought with greater ardour than any common labourer."

The next point of his character is very English also, but less honourably so. I said but now that he had a great objection to anybody whom he clearly comprehended to be a thief. But he had great difficulty in reaching anything like an abstract

definition of thieving, such as would include every method of it, and every culprit, which is an incapacity very common to many of us to this day. For instance, he carried off a great deal of treasure which belonged to his father, from Chinon (the royal treasury-town in France), and fortified his own castles in Poitou with it; and when he wanted money to go crusading with, sold the royal castles, manors, woods, and forests, and even the superiority of the Crown of England over the kingdom of Scotland, which his father had wrought hard for, for about a hundred thousand pounds. Nay, the highest honours and most important offices become venal under him, and from a Princess's dowry to a Saracen caravan, nothing comes much amiss; not but that he gives generously also,—whole ships at a time when he is in the humour; but his main practice is getting and spending, never saving; which covetousness is at last the death of him. For hearing that a considerable treasure of ancient coins and medals has been found in the lands of Vidomar, Viscount of Limoges, King Richard sends forthwith to claim this waif for himself. The Viscount offers him part only, presumably having an antiquarian turn of mind. Whereupon Richard loses his temper, and marches forthwith with some Brabant men, mercenaries, to besiege the Viscount in his castle of Chalus; proposing, first, to possess himself of the antique and otherwise interesting coin in the castle, and then, on his general principle of objection to thieves, to hang the garrison. The

garrison, on this, offer to give up the antiquities if they may march off themselves; but Richard declares that nothing will serve but they must all be hanged. Whereon the siege proceeding by rule, and Richard looking, as usual, into matters with his own eyes, and going too near the walls, an arrow well meant, though half spent, pierces the strong, white shoulder,—the shield-bearing one, carelessly forward, above instead of under shield; or perhaps, rather, when he was afoot, shieldless, engineering. He finishes his work, however, though the scratch teases him; plans his assault, carries his castle, and duly hangs his garrison, all but the archer, whom in his royal, unreasoning way he thinks better of, for the well-spent arrow. But he pulls it out impatiently, and the head of it stays in the fair flesh; a little surgery follows; not so skilful as the archery of those days, and the lion heart is appeased—

Sixth April, 1199.

We will pursue our historical studies, if you please, in that month of the present year. But I wish, in the meantime, you would observe, and meditate on, the quite Anglican character of Richard, to his death.

It might have been remarked to him, on his projecting the expedition to Chalus, that there were not a few Roman coins, and other antiquities, to be found in his own kingdom of England, without fighting for them, but by mere spade labour and other innocuous means;—that even the brightest

new money was obtainable from his loyal people in almost any quantity for civil asking; and that the same loyal people, encouraged and protected, and above all, kept clean-handed, in the arts, by their king, might produce treasures more covetable than any antiquities.

"No;" Richard would have answered,—"that is all hypothetical and visionary; here is a pot of coin presently to be had—no doubt about it—inside the walls here:—let me once get hold of that, and then,"—

* * * * *

That is what we English call being "Practical."

Believe me,

Faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

## LETTER IV

### *SWITCHES OF BROOM*

DENMARK HILL,
*1st April*, 1871.

MY FRIENDS,

IT cannot but be pleasing to us to reflect, this day, that if we are often foolish enough to talk English without understanding it, we are often wise enough to talk Latin without knowing it. For this month retains its pretty Roman name, and means the month of Opening; of the light in the days, and the life in the leaves, and of the voices of birds, and of the hearts of men.

And being the month of Manifestation, it is pre-eminently the month of Fools;—for under the beatific influences of moral sunshine, or Education, the Fools always come out first.

But what is less pleasing to reflect upon, this spring morning, is, that there are some kinds of education which may be described, not as moral sunshine, but as moral moonshine; and that, under these, Fools come out both First—and Last.

We have, it seems, now set our opening hearts much on this one point, that we will have education for all men and women now, and for all boys and girls that are to be. Nothing, indeed, can be more desirable, if only we determine also what kind of

education we are to have. It is taken for granted that any education must be good;—that the more of it we get, the better; that bad education only means little education; and that the worst thing we have to fear is getting none. Alas, that is not at all so. Getting no education is by no means the worst thing that can happen to us. One of the pleasantest friends I ever had in my life was a Savoyard guide, who could only read with difficulty, and write scarcely intelligibly, and by great effort. He knew no language but his own—no science, except as much practical agriculture as served him to till his fields. But he was, without exception, one of the happiest persons, and, on the whole, one of the best, I have ever known: and after lunch, when he had had his half bottle of Savoy wine, he would generally, as we walked up some quiet valley in the afternoon light, give me a little lecture on philosophy; and after I had fatigued and provoked him with less cheerful views of the world than his own, he would fall back to my servant behind me, and console himself with a shrug of the shoulders, and a whispered "Le pauvre enfant, il ne sait pas vivre!" —("The poor child, he doesn't know how to live.")

No, my friends, believe me, it is not the going without education at all that we have most to dread. The real thing to be feared is getting a bad one. There are all sorts—good, and very good; bad, and very bad. The children of rich people often get the worst education that is to be had for money; the children of the poor often get the best for nothing.

And you have really these two things now to decide for yourselves in England before you can take one quite safe practical step in the matter, namely, first, what a good education is; and, secondly, who is likely to give it you.

What it is? "Everybody knows that," I suppose you would most of you answer. "Of course—to be taught to read, and write, and cast accounts; and to learn geography, and geology, and astronomy, and chemistry, and German, and French, and Italian, and Latin, and Greek and the aboriginal Aryan language."

Well, when you had learned all that, what would you do next? "Next? Why then we should be perfectly happy, and make as much money as ever we liked, and we would turn out our toes before any company." I am not sure myself, and I don't think you can be, of any one of these three things. At least, as to making you very happy, I know something, myself, of nearly all these matters—not much, but still quite as much as most men, under the ordinary chances of life, with a fair education, are likely to get together—and I assure you the knowledge does not make me happy at all. When I was a boy I used to like seeing the sun rise. I didn't know, then, there were any spots on the sun; now I do, and am always frightened lest any more should come. When I was a boy, I used to care about pretty stones. I got some Bristol diamonds at Bristol, and some dog-tooth spar in Derbyshire; my whole collection had cost, perhaps,

three half-crowns, and was worth considerably less; and I knew nothing whatever, rightly, about any single stone in it;—could not even spell their names: but words cannot tell the joy they used to give me. Now, I have a collection of minerals worth perhaps from two to three thousand pounds; and I know more about some of them than most other people. But I am not a whit happier, either for my knowledge, or possessions; for other geologists dispute my theories, to my grievous indignation and discontentment; and I am miserable about all my best specimens, because there are better in the British Museum.

No, I assure you, knowledge by itself will not make you happy; still less will it make you rich. Perhaps you thought I was writing carelessly when I told you, last month, "science did not pay." But you don't know what science is. You fancy it means mechanical art; and so you have put a statue of Science on the Holborn Viaduct, with a steam-engine regulator in its hands. My ingenious friends, science has no more to do with making steam-engines than with making breeches; though she condescends to help you a little in such necessary (or it may be, conceivably, in both cases, sometimes unnecessary) businesses. Science lives only in quiet places, and with odd people, mostly poor. Mr. John Kepler, for instance, who is found by Sir Henry Wotton "in the picturesque green country by the shores of the Donau, in a little black tent in a field, convertible, like a windmill, to all quarters, a camera-obscura, in

fact. Mr. John invents rude toys, writes almanacks, practises medicine, for good reasons, his encouragement from the Holy Roman Empire and mankind being a pension of £18 a year, and that hardly ever paid."* That is what one gets by star-gazing, my friends. And you cannot be simple enough, even in April, to think I got my three thousand pounds'-worth of minerals by studying mineralogy? Not so; they were earned for me by hard labour; my father's in England, and many a sun-burnt vineyard-dresser's in Spain.

"What business had you, in your idleness, with their earnings then?" you will perhaps ask. None, it may be; I will tell you in a little while how you may find that out; it is not to the point now. But it is to the point that you should observe I have not kept their earnings, the portion of them, at least, with which I bought minerals. That part of their earnings is all gone to feed the miners in Cornwall, or on the Hartz mountains, and I have only got for myself a few pieces of glittering (not always that, but often unseemly) stone, which neither vine-dressers nor miners cared for; which you yourselves would have to learn many hard words, much cramp mathematics, and useless chemistry, in order to care for; which, if ever you did care for, as I do, would most likely only make you envious of the British Museum, and occasionally uncomfortable if any harm happened to your dear stones.

* Carlyle, *Frederick*, vol. i. p. 321 (first edition).

I have a piece of red oxide of copper, for instance, which grieves me poignantly by losing its colour; and a crystal of sulphide of lead, with a chip in it, which causes me a great deal of concern—in April; because I see it then by the fresh sunshine.

My oxide of copper and sulphide of lead you will not then wisely envy me. Neither, probably, would you covet a handful of hard brown gravel, with a rough pebble in it, whitish, and about the size of a pea; nor a few grains of apparently brass filings, with which the gravel is mixed. I was but a fool to give good money for such things, you think? It may well be. I gave thirty pounds for that handful of gravel, and the miners who found it were ill-paid then; and it is not clear to me that this produce of their labour was the best possible. Shall we consider of it, with the help of the Cambridge Catechism? at the tenth page of which you will find that Mr. Mill's definition of productive labour is—"That which produces utilities fixed and embodied in material objects."

This is very fine—indeed, superfine—English; but I can, perhaps, make the meaning of the Greatest Thinker in England a little more lucid for you by vulgarizing his terms.

"Object," you must always remember, is fine English for "Thing." It is a semi-Latin word, and properly means a thing "thrown in your way;" so that if you put "ion" to the end of it, it becomes Objection. We will rather say "Thing," if you have no objection—you and I. A "Material"

thing, then, of course, signifies something solid and tangible. It is very necessary for Political Economists always to insert this word "material," lest people should suppose that there was any use or value in Thought or Knowledge, and other such immaterial objects.

"Embodied" is a particularly elegant word; but superfluous, because you know it would not be possible that a Utility should be disembodied, as long as it was in a material object. But when you wish to express yourself as thinking in a great manner, you may say—as, for instance, when you are supping vegetable soup—that your power of doing so conveniently and gracefully is "Embodied" in a spoon.

"Fixed" is, I am afraid, rashly, as well as superfluously, introduced into his definition by Mr. Mill. It is conceivable that some Utilities may be also volatile, or planetary, even when embodied. But at last we come to the great word in the great definition—"Utility."

And this word, I am sorry to say, puzzles me most of all; for I never myself saw a Utility, either out of the body, or in it, and should be much embarrassed if ordered to produce one in either state.

But it is fortunate for us that all this seraphic language, reduced to the vulgar tongue, will become, though fallen in dignity and reduced in dimension, perfectly intelligible. The Greatest Thinker in England means by these beautiful words to tell you that Productive labour is labour that produces a

Useful Thing. Which, indeed, perhaps, you knew —or, without the assistance of great thinkers, might have known, before now. But if Mr. Mill had said so much, simply, you might have been tempted to ask farther—"What things are useful, and what are not?" And as Mr. Mill does not know, nor any other Political Economist going,—and as they therefore particularly wish nobody to ask them,—it is convenient to say instead of "useful things," "utilities fixed and embodied in material objects," because that sounds so very like complete and satisfactory information, that one is ashamed, after getting it, to ask for any more.

But it is not, therefore, less discouraging that for the present I have got no help towards discovering whether my handful of gravel with the white pebble in it was worth my thirty pounds or not. I am afraid it is not a useful thing to *me*. It lies at the back of a drawer, locked up all the year round. I never look at it now, for I know all about it: the only satisfaction I have for my money is knowing that nobody else can look at it; and if nobody else wanted to, I shouldn't even have that.

"What did you buy it for, then?" you will ask. Well, if you must have the truth, because I was a Fool, and wanted it. Other people have bought such things before me. The white stone is a diamond, and the apparent brass filings are gold dust; but, I admit, nobody ever yet wanted such things who was in his right senses. Only now, as I have candidly answered all your questions, will you answer one of mine?

If I hadn't bought it, what would you have had me do with my money? Keep *that* in the drawer instead?—or at my banker's, till it grew out of thirty pounds into sixty and a hundred, in fulfilment of the law respecting seed sown in good ground?

Doubtless, that would have been more meritorious for the time. But when I had got the sixty or the hundred pounds—what should I have done with *them?* The question only becomes doubly and trebly serious; and all the more, to me, because when I told you last January that I had bought a picture for a thousand pounds, permitting myself in that folly for your advantage, as I thought, hearing that many of you wanted art Patronage, and wished to live by painting,—one of your own popular organs, the *Liverpool Daily Courier*, of February 9th, said, "it showed want of taste,—of tact," and was "something like a mockery," to tell you so! I am not to buy pictures, therefore, it seems;—you like to be kept in mines and tunnels, and occasionally blown hither and thither, or crushed flat, rather than live by painting, in good light, and with the chance of remaining all day in a whole and unextended skin? But what *shall* I buy, then, with the next thirty pieces of gold I can scrape together? Precious things have been bought, indeed, and sold, before now for thirty pieces, even of silver, but with doubtful issue. The over-charitable person who was bought to be killed at that price, indeed, advised the giving of alms; but you won't have alms, I suppose, you are so independent, nor go into almshouses—(and,

truly, I did not much wonder, as I walked by the old church of Abingdon, a Sunday or two since, where the almshouses are set round the churchyard, and under the level of it, and with a cheerful view of it, except that the tombstones slightly block the light of the lattice-windows; with beautiful texts from Scripture over the doors, to remind the paupers still more emphatically that, highly blessed as they were, they were yet mortal)—you won't go into almshouses; and all the clergy in London have been shrieking against almsgiving to the lower poor this whole winter long, till I am obliged, whenever I want to give anybody a penny, to look up and down the street first, to see if a clergyman's coming. Of course, I know I might buy as many iron railings as I please, and be praised; but I've no room for them. I can't well burn more coals than I do, because of the blacks, which spoil my books; and the Americans won't let me buy any blacks alive, or else I would have some black dwarfs with parrots, such as one sees in the pictures of Paul Veronese. I should, of course, like myself, above all things, to buy a pretty white girl, with a title—and I could get great praise for doing that—only I haven't money enough. White girls come dear, even when one buys them only like coals, for fuel. The Duke of Bedford, indeed, bought Joan of Arc from the French, to burn, for only ten thousand pounds, and a pension of three hundred a year to the Bastard of Vendôme—and I could and would have given that for her, and not burnt her; but one hasn't such a chance every day. *Will* you,

any of you, have the goodness—beggars, clergymen, workmen, seraphic doctors, Mr. Mill, Mr. Fawcett, or the Politico-Economic Professor of my own University—I challenge you, I beseech you, all and singly, to tell me what I am to do with my money.

I mean, indeed, to give you my own poor opinion on the subject in May; though I feel the more embarrassed in the thought of doing so, because, in this present April, I am so much a fool as not even to know clearly whether I have got any money or not. I know, indeed, that things go on at present as if I had; but it seems to me that there must be a mistake somewhere, and that some day it will be found out. For instance, I have seven thousand pounds in what we call the Funds or Founded things; but I am not comfortable about the Founding of them. All that I can see of them is a square bit of paper, with some ugly printing on it, and all that I know of them is that this bit of paper gives me a right to tax you every year, and make you pay me two hundred pounds out of your wages; which is very pleasant for me: but how long will you be pleased to do so? Suppose it should occur to you, any summer's day, that you had better not? Where would my seven thousand pounds be? In fact, where are they now? We call ourselves a rich people; but you see this seven thousand pounds of mine has no real existence;—it only means that you, the workers, are poorer by two hundred pounds a year than you would be if I hadn't got it. And this is surely a very odd kind of money for a country

to boast of. Well, then, besides this, I have a bit of low land at Greenwich, which, as far as I see anything of it, is not money at all, but only mud; and would be of as little use to me as my handful of gravel in the drawer, if it were not that an ingenious person has found out that he can make chimney-pots of it; and, every quarter, he brings me fifteen pounds off the price of his chimney-pots, so that I am always sympathetically glad when there's a high wind, because then I know my ingenious friend's business is thriving. But suppose it should come into his head, in any less windy month than this April, that he had better bring me none of the price of his chimneys? And even though he should go on, as I hope he will, patiently,—(and I always give him a glass of wine when he brings me the fifteen pounds,)—is this really to be called money of mine? And is the country any richer because, when anybody's chimney-pot is blown down in Greenwich, he must pay something extra, to me, before he can put it on again?

Then, also, I have some houses in Marylebone, which though indeed very ugly and miserable, yet, so far as they are actual beams and brick-bats put into shape, I might have imagined to be real property; only, you know, Mr. Mill says that people who build houses don't produce a commodity, but only do us a service. So I suppose my houses are not "utilities embodied in material objects" (and indeed they don't look much like it); but I know I have the right to keep anybody from living in them unless they pay me; only suppose some day

the Irish faith, that people ought to be lodged for nothing, should become an English one also—where would my money be? Where is it now, except as a chronic abstraction from other people's earnings?

So again, I have some land in Yorkshire—some Bank "Stock" (I don't in the least know what *that* is)—and the like; but whenever I examine into these possessions, I find they melt into one or another form of future taxation, and that I am always sitting (if I were working I shouldn't mind, but I am only sitting) at the receipt of Custom, and a Publican as well as a sinner. And then, to embarrass the business further yet, I am quite at variance with other people about the place where this money, whatever it is, comes from. The *Spectator*, for instance, in its article of 25th June of last year, on Mr. Goschen's "lucid and forcible speech of Friday-week," says that "the country is once more getting rich, and the money is filtering downwards to the actual workers." But whence, then, did it filter down to us, the actual idlers? This is really a question very appropriate for April. For such golden rain raineth *not* every day, but in a showery and capricious manner, out of heaven, upon us; mostly, as far as I can judge, rather pouring down than filtering upon idle persons, and running in thinner driblets, but I hope purer for the filtering process, to the "actual workers." But where *does* it come from? and in the times of drought between the showers, where does it go to? "The country is getting rich again," says the *Spectator;* but then, if the April clouds fail, may it get poor

again? And when it again becomes poor,—when, last 25th of June, it *was* poor,—what becomes, or had become, of the money? Was it verily lost, or only torpid in the winter of our discontent? or was it sown and buried in corruption, to be raised in a multifold power? When we are in a panic about our money, what do we think is going to happen to it? Can no economist teach us to keep it safe after we have once got it? nor any "beloved physician" —as I read the late Sir James Simpson is called in Edinburgh—guard even our solid gold against death, or at least, fits of an apoplectic character, alarming to the family?

All these questions trouble me greatly; but still to me the strangest point in the whole matter is, that though we idlers always speak as if we were enriched by Heaven, and became ministers of its bounty to *you;* if ever you think the ministry slack, and take to definite pillage of us, no good ever comes of it to you; but the sources of wealth seem to be stopped instantly, and you are reduced to the small gain of making gloves of our skins; while, on the contrary, as long as we continue pillaging you, there seems no end to the profitableness of the business; but always, however bare we strip you, presently, more, to be had. For instance—just read this little bit out of Froissart—about the English army in France before the battle of Crecy:—

"We will now return to the expedition of the King of England. Sir Godfrey de Harcourt, as marshal, advanced before the King, with the vanguard of five hundred armed

men and two thousand archers, and rode on for six or seven leagues' distance from the main army, burning and destroying the country. They found it rich and plentiful, abounding in all things; the barns full of every sort of corn, and the houses with riches: the inhabitants at their ease, having cars, carts, horses, swine, sheep, and everything in abundance which the country afforded. They seized whatever they chose of all these good things, and brought them to the King's army; but the soldiers did not give any account to their officers, or to those appointed by the King, of the gold and silver they took, which they kept to themselves. When they were come back, with all their booty safely packed in waggons, the Earl of Warwick, the Earl of Suffolk, the Lord Thomas Holland, and the Lord Reginald Cobham, took their march, with their battalion on the right, burning and destroying the country in the same way that Sir Godfrey de Harcourt was doing. The King marched, with the main body, between these two battalions; and every night they all encamped together. The King of England and Prince of Wales had, in their battalion, about three thousand men-at-arms, six thousand archers, ten thousand infantry, without counting those that were under the marshals; and they marched on in the manner I have before mentioned, burning and destroying the country, but without breaking their line of battle. They did not turn towards Coutances, but advanced to St. Lo, in Coutantin, which in those days was a very rich and commercial town, and worth three such towns as Coutances. In the town of St. Lo was much drapery, and many wealthy inhabitants; among them you might count eight or nine score that were engaged in commerce. When the King of England was come near to the town, he encamped; he would not lodge in it for fear of fire. He sent, therefore, his advanced

guard forward, who soon conquered it, at a trifling loss, and completely plundered it. No one can imagine the quantity of riches they found in it, nor the number of bales of cloth. If there had been any purchasers, they might have bought enough at a very cheap rate.

"The English then advanced towards Caen, which is a much larger town, stronger, and fuller of draperies and all other sorts of merchandize, rich citizens, noble dames and damsels, and fine churches.

"On this day (Froissart does not say what day) the English rose very early, and made themselves ready to march to Caen: the King heard mass before sunrise, and afterwards mounting his horse, with the Prince of Wales, and Sir Godfrey de Harcourt (who was marshal and director of the army), marched forward in order of battle. The battalion of the marshals led the van, and came near to the handsome town of Caen.

"When the townsmen, who had taken the field, perceived the English advancing, with banners and pennons flying in abundance, and saw those archers whom they had not been accustomed to, they were so frightened that they betook themselves to flight, and ran for the town in great disorder.

"The English, who were after the runaways, made great havoc; for they spared none.

"Those inhabitants who had taken refuge in the garrets, flung down from them, in these narrow streets, stones, benches, and whatever they could lay hands on; so that they killed and wounded upwards of five hundred of the English, which so enraged the King of England, when he received the reports in the evening, that he ordered the remainder of the inhabitants to be put to the sword, and the town burnt. But Sir Godfrey de Harcourt said

to him: 'Dear sir, assuage somewhat of your anger, and be satisfied with what has already been done. You have a long journey yet to make before you arrive at Calais, whither it is your intention to go: and there are in this town a great number of inhabitants, who will defend themselves obstinately in their houses, if you force them to it: besides, it will cost you many lives before the town can be destroyed, which may put a stop to your expedition to Calais, and it will not redound to your honour: therefore be sparing of your men, for in a month's time you will have call for them.' The King replied: 'Sir Godfrey, you are our marshal; therefore order as you please; for this time we wish not to interfere.'

"Sir Godfrey then rode through the streets, his banner displayed before him, and ordered, in the King's name, that no one should dare, under pain of immediate death, to insult or hurt man or woman of the town, or attempt to set fire to any part of it. Several of the inhabitants, on hearing this proclamation, received the English into their houses; and others opened their coffers to them, giving up their all, since they were assured of their lives. However, there were, in spite of these orders, many atrocious thefts and murders committed. The English continued masters of the town for three days; in this time, they amassed great wealth, which they sent in barges down the river of Estreham, to St. Sauveur, two leagues off, where their fleet was. The Earl of Huntingdon made preparation therefore, with the two hundred men-at-arms and his four hundred archers, to carry over to England their riches and prisoners. The King purchased, from Sir Thomas Holland and his companions, the constable of France and the Earl of Tancarville, and paid down twenty thousand nobles for them.

"When the King had finished his business in Caen, and sent his fleet to England, loaded with cloths, jewels, gold and silver plate, and a quantity of other riches, and upwards of sixty knights, with three hundred able citizens, prisoners; he then left his quarters and continued his march as before, his two marshals on his right and left, burning and destroying all the flat country. He took the road to Evreux, but found he could not gain anything there, as it was well fortified. He went on towards another town called Louviers, which was in Normandy, and where there were many manufactories of cloth: it was rich and commercial. The English won it easily, as it was not inclosed; and having entered the town, it was plundered without opposition. They collected much wealth there; and, after they had done what they pleased, they marched on into the county of Evreux, where they burnt everything except the fortified towns and castles, which the King left unattacked, as he was desirous of sparing his men and artillery. He therefore made for the banks of the Seine, in his approach to Rouen, where there were plenty of men-at-arms from Normandy, under the command of the Earl of Harcourt, brother to Sir Godfrey, and the Earl of Dreux.

"The English did not march direct towards Rouen, but went to Gisors, which has a strong castle, and burnt the town. After this, they destroyed Vernon, and all the country between Rouen and Pont-de-l'Arche: they then came to Mantes and Meulan, which they treated in the same manner, and ravaged all the country round about.

"They passed by the strong castle of Roulleboise, and everywhere found the bridges on the Seine broken down. They pushed forward until they came to Poissy, where the bridge was also destroyed; but the beams and other parts of it were lying in the river.

"The King of England remained at the nunnery of Poissy to the middle in August, and celebrated there the feast of the Virgin Mary."

It all reads at first, you see, just like a piece out of the newspapers of last month; but there are material differences, notwithstanding. We fight inelegantly as well as expensively, with machines instead of bow and spear; we kill about a thousand now to the score then, in settling any quarrel—(Agincourt was won with the loss of less than a hundred men; only 25,000 English altogether were engaged at Crecy; and 12,000, some say only 8,000, at Poictiers); we kill with far ghastlier wounds, crashing bones and flesh together; we leave our wounded necessarily for days and nights in heaps on the fields of battle; we pillage districts twenty times as large, and with completer destruction of more valuable property; and with a destruction as irreparable as it is complete; for if the French or English burnt a church one day, they could build a prettier one the next; but the modern Prussians couldn't even build so much as an imitation of one; we rob on credit, by requisition, with ingenious mercantile prolongations of claim; and we improve contention of arms with contention of tongues, and are able to multiply the rancour of cowardice, and mischief of lying, in universal and permanent print; and so we lose our tempers as well as our money, and become indecent in behaviour as in raggedness; for, whereas, in old times, two nations separated by a little pebbly stream like the Tweed, or even the two

halves of one nation, separated by thirty fathoms' depth of salt water (for most of the English knights and all the English kings were French by race, and the best of them by birth also)—would go on pillaging and killing each other century after century, without the slightest ill-feeling towards, or disrespect for, one another,—we can neither give anybody a beating courteously, nor take one in good part, or without screaming and lying about it: and finally, we add to these perfected Follies of Action more finely perfected Follies of Inaction; and contrive hitherto unheard-of ways of being wretched through the very abundance of peace; our workmen, here, vowing themselves to idleness, lest they should lower Wages, and there, being condemned by their parishes to idleness lest they should lower Prices; while outside the workhouse all the parishioners are buying anything nasty, so that it be cheap; and, in a word, under the seraphic teaching of Mr. Mill, we have determined at last that it is not Destruction, but Production, that is the cause of human distress; and the "Mutual and Co-operative Colonization Company" declares, ungrammatically, but distinctly, in its circular sent to me on the 13th of last month, as a matter universally admitted, even among Cabinet Ministers—"that it is in the greater increasing power of production and distribution as compared with demand, enabling the few to do the work of many, that the active cause of the wide-spread poverty among the producing and lower-middle classes lay, which entails such

enormous burdens on the Nation, and exhibits our boasted progress in the light of a monstrous Sham."

Nevertheless, however much we have magnified and multiplied the follies of the past, the primal and essential principles of pillage have always been accepted; and from the days when England lay so waste under that worthy and economical King who "called his tailor lown," that "whole families, after sustaining life as long as they could by eating roots, and the flesh of dogs and horses, at last died of hunger, and you might see many pleasant villages without a single inhabitant of either sex," while little Harry Switch-of-Broom sate learning to spell in Bristol Castle, (taught, I think, properly by his good uncle the preceptorial use of his name-plant, though they say the first Harry was the finer clerk,) and his mother, dressed all in white, escaped from Oxford over the snow in the moonlight, through Bagley Wood here to Abingdon; and under the snows, by Woodstock, the buds were growing for the bower of his Rose,—from that day to this, when the villages round Paris, and food-supply, are, by the blessing of God, as they then were round London—Kings have for the most part desired to win that pretty name of "Switch-of-Broom" rather by habit of growing in waste places; or even emulating the Vision of Dion in "sweeping—diligently sweeping," than by attaining the other virtue of the Planta Genista, set forth by Virgil and Pliny, that it is pliant, and rich in honey; the Lion-hearts of them seldom proving

profitable to you, even so much as the stomach of Samson's Lion, or rendering it a soluble enigma in our Israel, that "out of the eater came forth meat;" nor has it been only your Kings who have thus made you pay for their guidance through the world, but your ecclesiastics have also made you pay for guidance out of it—particularly when it grew dark, and the signpost was illegible where the upper and lower roads divided;—so that, as far as I can read or calculate, dying has been even more expensive to you than living; and then, to finish the business, as your virtues have been made costly to you by the clergyman, so your vices have been made costly to you by the lawyers; and you have one entire learned profession living on your sins, and the other on your repentance. So that it is no wonder that, things having gone on thus for a long time, you begin to think that you would rather live as sheep without any shepherd, and that having paid so dearly for your instruction in religion and law, you should now set your hope on a state of instruction in Irreligion and Liberty, which is, indeed, a form of education to be had for nothing, alike by the children of the Rich and Poor; the saplings of the tree that was to be desired to make us wise, growing now in copsewood on the hills, or even by the roadsides, in a Republican-Plantagenet manner, blossoming into cheapest gold, either for coins, which of course you Republicans will call, not Nobles, but Ignobles; or crowns, second and third hand—(head, I should say)—supplied punctually on

demand, with liberal reduction on quantity; the roads themselves beautifully public — tramwayed, perhaps—and with gates set open enough for all men to the free, outer, better world, your chosen guide preceding you merrily, thus—

with music and dancing.

You have always danced too willingly, poor friends, to that player on the viol. We will try to hear, far away, a faint note or two from a more chief musician on stringed instruments, in May, when the time of the Singing of Birds is come.

Faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

HOPE

*Drawn thus by* GIOTTO, *in the Chapel of the Arena at* PADUA.

## LETTER V

*WHITETHORN BLOSSOM*

"For lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone,
The flowers appear on the earth,
The time of the singing of birds is come,
Arise, O my fair one, my dove,
And come."

DENMARK HILL,
*1st May*, 1871.

MY FRIENDS,—

IT has been asked of me, very justly, why I have hitherto written to you of things you were little likely to care for, in words which it was difficult for you to understand.

I have no fear but that you will one day understand all my poor words,—the saddest of them perhaps too well. But I have great fear that you may never come to understand these written above, which are part of a king's love-song, in one sweet May, of many long since gone.

I fear that for you the wild winter's rain may never pass,—the flowers never appear on the earth; —that for you no bird may ever sing;—for you no perfect Love arise, and fulfil your life in peace.

"And why not for us, as for others?" will you answer me so, and take my fear for you as an insult?

Nay, it is no insult;—nor am I happier than you. For me, the birds do not sing, nor ever will. But they would, for you, if you cared to have it so. When I told you that you would never understand that love-song, I meant only that you would not desire to understand it.

Are you again indignant with me? Do you think, though you should labour, and grieve, and be trodden down in dishonour all your days, at least you can keep that one joy of Love, and that one honour of Home? Had you, indeed, kept that, you had kept all. But no men yet, in the history of the race, have lost it so piteously. In many a country, and many an age, women have been compelled to labour for their husband's wealth, or bread; but never until now were they so homeless as to say, like the poor Samaritan, "I have no husband." Women of every country and people have sustained without complaint the labour of fellowship: for the women of the latter days in England it has been reserved to claim the privilege of isolation.

This, then, is the end of your universal education and civilization, and contempt of the ignorance of the Middle Ages, and of their chivalry. Not only do you declare yourselves too indolent to labour for daughters and wives, and too poor to support them; but you have made the neglected and distracted creatures hold it for an honour to be independent of you, and shriek for some hold of the mattock for themselves. Believe it or not, as you may, there

has not been so low a level of thought reached by any race, since they grew to be male and female out of star-fish, or chickweed, or whatever else they have been made from, by natural selection,—according to modern science.

That modern science also, Economic and of other kinds, has reached its climax at last. For it seems to be the appointed function of the nineteenth century to exhibit in all things the elect pattern of perfect Folly, for a warning to the farthest future. Thus the statement of principle which I quoted to you in my last letter, from the circular of the Emigration Society, that it is over-production which is the cause of distress, is accurately the most foolish thing, not only hitherto ever said by men, but which it is possible for men ever to say, respecting their own business. It is a kind of opposite pole (or negative acme of mortal stupidity) to Newton's discovery of gravitation as an acme of mortal wisdom:—as no wise being on earth will ever be able to make such another wise discovery, so no foolish being on earth will ever be capable of saying such another foolish thing, through all the ages.

And the same crisis has been exactly reached by our natural science and by our art. It has several times chanced to me, since I began these papers, to have the exact thing shown or brought to me that I wanted for illustration, just in time*—and it

* Here is another curious instance: I have but a minute ago finished correcting these sheets, and take up the *Times* of this morning, April 21st, and find in it the suggestion by the Chancellor

happened that on the very day on which I published my last letter, I had to go to the Kensington Museum; and there I saw the most perfectly and roundly ill-done thing which, as yet, in my whole life I ever saw produced by art. It had a tablet in front of it, bearing this inscription,—

"Statue in black and white marble, a Newfoundland Dog standing on a Serpent, which rests on a marble cushion, the pedestal ornamented with pietra dura fruits in relief.—*English. Present Century.* No. I."

It was so very right for me, the Kensington people having been good enough to number it "I.," the thing itself being almost incredible in its oneness; and, indeed, such a punctual accent over the iota of Miscreation,—so absolutely and exquisitely miscreant, that I am not myself capable of conceiving a Number two, or three, or any rivalship or association with it whatsoever. The extremity of its unvirtue consisted, observe, mainly in the quantity of instruction which was abused in it. It showed that the persons who produced it had seen everything, and practised everything; and misunderstood everything they saw, and misapplied everything they did. They had seen Roman work, and Florentine work, and Byzantine work, and Gothic work; and misunderstanding of everything

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of the Exchequer for the removal of exemption from taxation, of Agricultural horses and carts, in the very nick of time to connect it, as a proposal for economic practice, with the statement of economic principle respecting Production, quoted on last page.

had passed through them as the mud does through earthworms, and here at last was their worm-cast of a Production.

But the second chance that came to me that day, was more significant still. From the Kensington Museum I went to an afternoon tea, at a house where I was sure to meet some nice people. And among the first I met was an old friend who had been hearing some lectures on botany at the Kensington Museum, and been delighted by them. She is the kind of person who gets good out of everything, and she was quite right in being delighted; besides that, as I found by her account of them, the lectures were really interesting, and pleasantly given. She had expected botany to be dull, and had not found it so, and "had learned so much." On hearing this, I proceeded naturally to inquire what; for my idea of her was that before she went to the lectures at all, she had known more botany than she was likely to learn by them. So she told me that she had learned first of all that "there were seven sorts of leaves." Now I have always a great suspicion of the number Seven; because when I wrote the Seven Lamps of Architecture, it required all the ingenuity I was master of to prevent them from becoming Eight, or even Nine, on my hands. So I thought to myself that it would be very charming if there were only seven sorts of leaves; but that, perhaps, if one looked the woods and forests of the world carefully through, it was just possible that one might discover as many as

eight sorts; and then where would my friend's new knowledge of Botany be? So I said, "That was very pretty; but what more?" Then my friend told me that she had no idea, before, that petals were leaves. On which, I thought to myself that it would not have been any great harm to her if she had remained under her old impression that petals were petals. But I said, "That was very pretty, too; and what more?" So then my friend told me that the lecturer said, "the object of his lectures would be entirely accomplished if he could convince his hearers that there was no such thing as a flower." Now, in that sentence you have the most perfect and admirable summary given you of the general temper and purposes of modern science. It gives lectures on Botany, of which the object is to show that there is no such thing as a flower; on Humanity, to show that there is no such thing as a Man; and on Theology, to show there is no such thing as a God. No such thing as a Man, but only a Mechanism; no such thing as a God, but only a series of forces. The two faiths are essentially one: if you feel yourself to be only a machine, constructed to be a Regulator of minor machinery, you will put your statue of such science on your Holborn Viaduct, and necessarily recognize only major machinery as regulating *you*.

I must explain the real meaning to you, however, of that saying of the Botanical lecturer, for it has a wide bearing. Some fifty years ago the poet Goethe discovered that all the parts of plants had

a kind of common nature, and would change into each other. Now this was a true discovery, and a notable one; and you will find that, in fact, all plants are composed of essentially two parts—the leaf and root—one loving the light, the other darkness; one liking to be clean, the other to be dirty; one liking to grow for the most part up, the other for the most part down; and each having faculties and purposes of its own. But the pure one which loves the light has, above all things, the purpose of being married to another leaf, and having child-leaves, and children's children of leaves, to make the earth fair for ever. And when the leaves marry, they put on wedding-robes, and are more glorious than Solomon in all his glory, and they have feasts of honey, and we call them "Flowers."

In a certain sense, therefore, you see the Botanical lecturer was quite right. There are no such things as Flowers—there are only Leaves. Nay, farther than this, there may be a dignity in the less happy, but unwithering leaf, which is, in some sort, better than the brief lily of its bloom;—which the great poets always knew,—well;—Chaucer, before Goethe; and the writer of the first Psalm, before Chaucer. The Botanical lecturer was, in a deeper sense than he knew, right.

But in the deepest sense of all, the Botanical lecturer was, to the extremity of wrongness, wrong; for leaf, and root, and fruit, exist, all of them, only —that there may be flowers. He disregarded the life and passion of the creature, which were its

essence. Had he looked for these, he would have recognized that in the thought of Nature herself, there is, in a plant, nothing else but its flowers.

Now in exactly the sense that modern Science declares there is no such thing as a Flower, it has declared there is no such thing as a Man, but only a transitional form of Ascidians and apes. It may, or may not be true—it is not of the smallest consequence whether it be or not. The real fact is, that, seen with human eyes, there is nothing else but man; that all animals and beings beside him are only made that they may change into him; that the world truly exists only in the presence of Man, acts only in the passion of Man. The essence of light is in his eyes,—the centre of Force in his soul,—the pertinence of action in his deeds.

And all true science—which my Savoyard guide rightly scorned me when he thought I had not,—all true science is "savoir vivre." But all your modern science is the contrary of that. It is "savoir mourir."

And of its very discoveries, such as they are, it cannot make use.

That telegraphic signalling was a discovery; and conceivably, some day, may be a useful one. And there was some excuse for your being a little proud when, about last sixth of April (Cœur de Lion's death-day, and Albert Durer's), you knotted a copper wire all the way to Bombay, and flashed a message along it, and back.

But what was the message, and what the answer?

Is India the better for what you said to her? Are you the better for what she replied?

If not, you have only wasted an all-round-the-world's length of copper wire,—which is, indeed, about the sum of your doing. If you had had, perchance, two words of common sense to say, though you had taken wearisome time and trouble to send them;—though you had written them slowly in gold, and sealed them with a hundred seals, and sent a squadron of ships of the line to carry the scroll, and the squadron had fought its way round the Cape of Good Hope, through a year of storms, with loss of all its ships but one,—the two words of common sense would have been worth the carriage, and more. But you have not anything like so much as that to say, either to India, or to any other place.

You think it a great triumph to make the sun draw brown landscapes for you. That was also a discovery, and some day may be useful. But the sun had drawn landscapes before for you, not in brown, but in green, and blue, and all imaginable colours, here in England. Not one of you ever looked at them then; not one of you cares for the loss of them now, when you have shut the sun out with smoke, so that he can draw nothing more, except brown blots through a hole in a box. There was a rocky valley between Buxton and Bakewell, once upon a time, divine as the Vale of Tempe; you might have seen the Gods there morning and evening —Apollo and all the sweet Muses of the light— walking in fair procession on the lawns of it, and

to and fro among the pinnacles of its crags. You cared neither for Gods nor grass, but for cash (which you did not know the way to get); you thought you could get it by what the *Times* calls "Railroad Enterprise." You Enterprised a Railroad through the valley—you blasted its rocks away, heaped thousands of tons of shale into its lovely stream. The valley is gone, and the Gods with it; and now, every fool in Buxton can be at Bakewell in half an hour, and every fool in Bakewell at Buxton; which you think a lucrative process of exchange—you Fools Everywhere.

To talk at a distance, when you have nothing to say, though you were ever so near; to go fast from this place to that, with nothing to do either at one or the other: these are powers certainly. Much more, power of increased Production, if you, indeed, had got it, would be something to boast of. But are you so entirely sure that you *have* got it—that the mortal disease of plenty, and afflictive affluence of good things, are all you have to dread?

Observe. A man and a woman, with their children, properly trained, are able easily to cultivate as much ground as will feed them; to build as much wall and roof as will lodge them, and to build and weave as much cloth as will clothe them. They can all be perfectly happy and healthy in doing this. Supposing that they invent machinery which will build, plough, thresh, cook, and weave, and that they have none of these things any more to do, but may read, or play croquet, or cricket, all day long,

I believe myself that they will neither be so good nor so happy as without the machines. But I waive my belief in this matter for the time. I will assume that they become more refined and moral persons, and that idleness is in future to be the mother of all good. But observe, I repeat, the power of your machine is only in enabling them to be idle. It will not enable them to live better than they did before, nor to live in greater numbers. Get your heads quite clear on this matter. Out of so much ground, only so much living is to be got, with or without machinery. You may set a million of steam-ploughs to work on an acre, if you like—out of that acre only a given number of grains of corn will grow, scratch or scorch it as you will. So that the question is not at all whether, by having more machines, more of you can live. No machines will increase the possibilities of life. They only increase the possibilities of idleness. Suppose, for instance, you could get the oxen in your plough driven by a goblin, who would ask for no pay, not even a cream bowl,—(you have nearly managed to get it driven by an iron goblin, as it is;)—Well, your furrow will take no more seeds than if you had held the stilts yourself. But, instead of holding them, you sit, I presume, on a bank beside the field, under an eglantine;—watch the goblin at his work, and read poetry. Meantime, your wife in the house has also got a goblin to weave and wash for her. And she is lying on the sofa reading poetry.

Now, as I said, I don't believe you would be

happier so, but I am willing to believe it; only, since you are already such brave mechanists, show me at least one or two places where you *are* happier. Let me see one small example of approach to this seraphic condition. *I* can show *you* examples, millions of them, of happy people, made happy by their own industry. Farm after farm I can show you, in Bavaria, Switzerland, the Tyrol, and such other places, where men and women are perfectly happy and good, without any iron servants. Show me, therefore, some English family, with its fiery familiar, happier than these. Or bring me,—for I am not inconvincible by any kind of evidence,—bring me the testimony of an English family or two to their increased felicity. Or if you cannot do so much as that, can you convince even themselves of it? They *are* perhaps happy, if only they knew how happy they were; Virgil thought so, long ago, of simple rustics; but you hear at present your steam-propelled rustics are crying out that they are anything else than happy, and that they regard their boasted progress "in the light of a monstrous Sham." I must tell you one little thing, however, which greatly perplexes my imagination of the relieved ploughman sitting under his rose bower, reading poetry. I have told it you before indeed, but I forget where. There was really a great festivity, and expression of satisfaction in the new order of things, down in Cumberland, a little while ago; some first of May, I think it was, a country festival, such as the old heathens, who had no iron ser-

vants, used to keep with piping and dancing. So I thought, from the liberated country people—their work all done for them by goblins—we should have some extraordinary piping and dancing. But there was no dancing at all, and they could not even provide their own piping. They had their goblin to pipe for them. They walked in procession after their steam plough, and their steam plough whistled to them occasionally in the most melodious manner it could. Which seemed to me, indeed, a return to more than Arcadian simplicity; for in old Arcadia, ploughboys truly whistled as they went, for want of thought; whereas, here was verily a large company walking without thought, but not having any more even the capacity of doing their own whistling.

But next, as to the inside of the house. Before you got your power-looms, a woman could always make herself a chemise and petticoat of bright and pretty appearance. I have seen a Bavarian peasant-woman at church in Munich, looking a much grander creature, and more beautifully dressed, than any of the crossed and embroidered angels in Hesse's high-art frescoes; (which happened to be just above her, so that I could look from one to the other). Well, here you are, in England, served by household demons, with five hundred fingers, at least, weaving, for one that used to weave in the days of Minerva. You ought to be able to show me five hundred dresses for one that used to be; tidiness ought to have become five hundred-fold tidier; tapestry should be increased into cinque-cento-fold

iridescence of tapestry. Not only your peasant-girl ought to be lying on the sofa reading poetry, but she ought to have in her wardrobe five hundred petticoats instead of one. Is that, indeed, your issue? or are you only on a curiously crooked way to it?

It is just possible, indeed, that you may not have been allowed to get the use of the goblin's work—that other people may have got the use of it, and you none; because, perhaps, you have not been able to evoke goblins wholly for your own personal service: but have been borrowing goblins from the capitalist, and paying interest, in the "position of William," on ghostly self-going planes; but suppose you had laid by capital enough, yourselves, to hire all the demons in the world,—nay,—all that are inside of it; are you quite sure you know what you might best set them to work at? and what "useful things" you should command them to make for you? I told you, last month, that no economist going (whether by steam or ghost) knew what are useful things and what are not. Very few of you know, yourselves, except by bitter experience of the want of them. And no demons, either of iron or spirit, can ever make them.

There are three Material things, not only useful, but essential to Life. No one "knows how to live" till he has got them.

These are, Pure Air, Water, and Earth.

There are three Immaterial things, not only useful but essential to Life. No one knows how to live till he has got them.

These are, Admiration, Hope, and Love.*

Admiration—the power of discerning and taking delight in what is beautiful in visible Form, and lovely in human Character; and, necessarily, striving to produce what is beautiful in form, and to become what is lovely in character.

Hope—the recognition, by true Foresight, of better things to be reached hereafter, whether by ourselves or others; necessarily issuing in the straightforward and undisappointable effort to advance, according to our proper power, the gaining of them.

Love, both of family and neighbour, faithful, and satisfied.

These are the six chiefly useful things to be got by Political Economy, when it *has* become a science. I will briefly tell you what modern Political Economy —the great "savoir mourir"—is doing with them.

The first three, I said, are Pure Air, Water, and Earth.

Heaven gives you the main elements of these. You can destroy them at your pleasure, or increase, almost without limit, the available qualities of them.

You can vitiate the air by your manner of life, and of death, to any extent. You might easily vitiate it so as to bring such a pestilence on the globe as would end all of you. You or your fellows, German and French, are at present busy in vitiating it to the best of your power in every direction; chiefly at

* Wordsworth, "Excursion," Book 4th.

this moment with corpses, and animal and vegetable ruin in war: changing men, horses, and garden-stuff into noxious gas. But everywhere, and all day long, you are vitiating it with foul chemical exhalations; and the horrible nests, which you call towns, are little more than laboratories for the distillation into heaven of venomous smokes and smells, mixed with effluvia from decaying animal matter, and infectious miasmata from purulent disease.

On the other hand, your power of purifying the air, by dealing properly and swiftly with all substances in corruption; by absolutely forbidding noxious manufactures; and by planting in all soils the trees which cleanse and invigorate earth and atmosphere,—is literally infinite. You might make every breath of air you draw, food.

Secondly, your power over the rain and river-waters of the earth is infinite. You can bring rain where you will, by planting wisely and tending carefully;—drought where you will, by ravage of woods and neglect of the soil. You might have the rivers of England as pure as the crystal of the rock; beautiful in falls, in lakes, in living pools; so full of fish that you might take them out with your hands instead of nets. Or you may do always as you have done now, turn every river of England into a common sewer, so that you cannot so much as baptize an English baby but with filth, unless you hold its face out in the rain; and even *that* falls dirty.

Then for the third, Earth,—meant to be nourishing for you, and blossoming. You have learned,

about it, that there is no such thing as a flower; and as far as your scientific hands and scientific brains, inventive of explosive and deathful, instead of blossoming and life giving, Dust, can contrive, you have turned the Mother-Earth, Demeter, into the Avenger-Earth, Tisiphone—with the voice of your brother's blood crying out of it, in one wild harmony round all its murderous sphere.

This is what you have done for the Three Material Useful Things.

Then for the Three Immaterial Useful Things. For Admiration, you have learnt contempt and conceit. There is no lovely thing ever yet done by man that you care for, or can understand; but you are persuaded you are able to do much finer things yourselves. You gather, and exhibit together, as if equally instructive, what is infinitely bad, with what is infinitely good. You do not know which is which; you instinctively prefer the Bad, and do more of it. You instinctively hate the Good, and destroy it.*

Then, secondly, for Hope. You have not so much

* Last night (I am writing this on the 18th of April) I got a letter from Venice, bringing me the, I believe, too well-grounded, report that the Venetians have requested permission from the government of Italy to pull down their Ducal Palace, and "rebuild" it. Put up a horrible model of it, in its place, that is to say, for which their architects may charge a commission. Meantime, all their canals are choked with human dung, which they are too poor to cart away, but throw out at their windows.

And all the great thirteenth-century cathedrals in France have been destroyed, within my own memory, only that architects might charge commission for putting up false models of them in their place.

spirit of it in you as to begin any plan which will not pay for ten years; nor so much intelligence of it in you, (either politicians or workmen), as to be able to form one clear idea of what you would like your country to become.

Then, thirdly, for Love. You were ordered by the Founder of your religion to love your neighbour as yourselves.

You have founded an entire Science of Political Economy, on what you have stated to be the constant instinct of man—the desire to defraud his neighbour.

And you have driven your women mad, so that they ask no more for Love, nor for fellowship with you; but stand against you, and ask for "justice."

Are there any of you who are tired of all this? Any of you, Landlords or Tenants? Employers or Workmen?

Are there any landlords,—any masters,—who would like better to be served by men than by iron devils?

Any tenants, any workmen, who can be true to their leaders and to each other? who can vow to work and to live faithfully, for the sake of the joy of their homes?

Will any such give the tenth of what they have, and of what they earn,—not to emigrate with, but to stay in England with; and do what is in their hands and hearts to make her a happy England?

I am not rich, (as people now estimate riches,)

and great part of what I have is already engaged in maintaining art-workmen, or for other objects more or less of public utility. The tenth of whatever is left to me, estimated as accurately as I can, (you shall see the accounts,) I will make over to you in perpetuity, with the best security that English law can give, on Christmas Day of this year, with engagement to add the tithe of whatever I earn afterwards. Who else will help, with little or much? the object of such fund being, to begin, and gradually—no matter how slowly—to increase, the buying and securing of land in England, which shall not be built upon, but cultivated by Englishmen, with their own hands, and such help of force as they can find in wind and wave.

I do not care with how many, or how few, this thing is begun, nor on what inconsiderable scale, —if it be but in two or three poor men's gardens. So much, at least, I can buy, myself, and give them. If no help come, I have done and said what I could, and there will be an end. If any help come to me, it is to be on the following conditions: —We will try to take some small piece of English ground, beautiful, peaceful, and fruitful. We will have no steam-engines upon it, and no railroads; we will have no untended or unthought-of creatures on it; none wretched, but the sick; none idle, but the dead. We will have no liberty upon it; but instant obedience to known law, and appointed persons: no equality upon it; but recognition of every betterness that we can find, and reprobation

of every worseness. When we want to go anywhere, we will go there quietly and safely, not at forty miles an hour in the risk of our lives; when we want to carry anything anywhere, we will carry it either on the backs of beasts, or on our own, or in carts, or boats; we will have plenty of flowers and vegetables in our gardens, plenty of corn and grass in our fields,—and few bricks. We will have some music and poetry; the children shall learn to dance to it and sing it;—perhaps some of the old people, in time, may also. We will have some art, moreover; we will at least try if, like the Greeks, we can't make some pots. The Greeks used to paint pictures of gods on their pots; we, probably, cannot do as much, but we may put some pictures of insects on them, and reptiles;—butterflies, and frogs, if nothing better. There was an excellent old potter in France who used to put frogs and vipers into his dishes, to the admiration of mankind; we can surely put something nicer than that. Little by little, some higher art and imagination may manifest themselves among us; and feeble rays of science may dawn for us. Botany, though too dull to dispute the existence of flowers; and history, though too simple to question the nativity of men;—nay—even perhaps an uncalculating and uncovetous wisdom, as of rude Magi, presenting, at such nativity, gifts of gold and frankincense.

Faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

ENVY

*Drawn thus by* GIOTTO, *in the Chapel of the Arena at* PADUA.

## LETTER VI

### *ELYSIAN FIELDS*

DENMARK HILL,
*1st June*, 1871.*

MY FRIENDS,

THE main purpose of these letters having been stated in the last of them, it is needful that I should tell you why I approach the discussion of it in this so desultory way, writing (as it is too true that I must continue to write,) "of things that you little care for, in words that you cannot easily understand."

I write of things you care little for, knowing that what you least care for is, at this juncture, of the greatest moment to you.

And I write in words you are little likely to understand, because I have no wish (rather the contrary) to tell you anything that you can understand without taking trouble. You usually read

* I think it best to publish this letter as it was prepared for press on the morning of the 25th of last month, at Abingdon, before the papers of that day had reached me. You may misinterpret its tone, and think it is written without feeling; but I will endeavour to give you, in my next letter, a brief statement of the meaning, to the French and to all other nations, of this war, and its results: in the meantime, trust me, there is probably no other man living to whom, in the abstract, and irrespective of loss of family and property, the ruin of Paris is so great a sorrow as it is to me.

so fast that you can catch nothing but the echo of your own opinions, which, of course, you are pleased to see in print. I neither wish to please, nor displease you; but to provoke you to think; to lead you to think accurately; and help you to form, perhaps, some different opinions from those you have now.

Therefore, I choose that you shall pay me the price of two pots of beer, twelve times in the year, for my advice, each of you who wants it.* If you like to think of me as a quack doctor, you are welcome; and you may consider the large margins, and thick paper, and ugly pictures of my book, as my caravan, drum, and skeleton. You would probably, if invited in that manner, buy my pills; and I should make a great deal of money out of you; but being an honest doctor, I still mean you to pay me what you ought. You fancy, doubtless, that I write—as most other political writers do—my 'opinions'; and that one man's opinion is as good as another's. You are much mistaken. When I only opine things, I hold my tongue; and work till I more than opine—until I know them. If the things prove unknowable, I, with final perseverance, hold my tongue about them, and recommend a like practice to other people. If the things prove knowable, as soon as I know them, I am ready to write about them, if need be; not till then. That is what

[* This passage, and another on a similar subject in Letter XI. refer to the original issue of these Letters in monthly parts.]

people call my 'arrogance.' They write and talk themselves, habitually, of what they know nothing about; they cannot in anywise conceive the state of mind of a person who will not speak till he knows; and then tells them, serenely, "This is so; you may find it out for yourselves, if you choose; but, however little you may choose it, the thing is still so."

Now it has cost me twenty years of thought, and of hard reading, to learn what I have to tell you in these pamphlets; and you will find, if you choose to find, it is true; and may prove, if you choose to prove, that it is useful: and I am not in the least minded to compete for your audience with the 'opinions' in your damp journals, morning and evening, the black of them coming off on your fingers, and—beyond all washing—into your brains. It is no affair of mine whether you attend to me or not; but yours wholly; my hand is weary of pen-holding—my heart is sick of thinking; for my own part, I would not write you these pamphlets though you would give me a barrel of beer, instead of two pints, for them:—I write them wholly for your sake; I choose that you shall have them decently printed on cream-coloured paper, and with a margin underneath, which you can write on, if you like. That is also for your sake: it is a proper form of book for any man to have who can keep his books clean; and if he cannot, he has no business with books at all. It costs me ten pounds to print a thousand copies, and five more to give you a picture;

and a penny off my sevenpence to send you the book;—a thousand sixpences are twenty-five pounds; when you have bought a thousand Fors of me, I shall therefore have five pounds for my trouble—and my single shopman, Mr. Allen, five pounds for his; we won't work for less, either of us; not that we would not, were it good for you; but it would be by no means good. And I mean to sell all my large books, henceforward, in the same way; well printed, well bound, and at a fixed price; and the trade may charge a proper and acknowledged profit for their trouble in retailing the book. Then the public will know what they are about, and so will tradesmen; I, the first producer, answer, to the best of my power, for the quality of the book;—paper, binding, eloquence, and all: the retail dealer charges what he ought to charge, openly; and if the public do not choose to give it, they can't get the book. That is what I call legitimate business.

Then as for this misunderstanding of me—remember that it is really not easy to understand anything, which you have not heard before, if it relates to a complex subject; also, it is quite easy to misunderstand things that you are hearing every day—which seem to you of the intelligiblest sort. But I *can* only write of things in my own way and as they come into my head; and of the things I care for, whether you care for them or not, as yet. I will answer for it, you must care for some of them, in time.

To take an instance close to my hand: you would

of course think it little conducive to your interests that I should give you any account of the wild hyacinths which are opening in flakes of blue fire, this day, within a couple of miles of me, in the glades of Bagley wood through which the Empress Maud fled in the snow, (and which, by the way, I slink through, myself, in some discomfort, lest the gamekeeper of the college of the gracious Apostle St. John should catch sight of me; not that he would ultimately decline to make a distinction between a poacher and a professor, but that I dislike the trouble of giving an account of myself). Or, if even you would bear with a scientific sentence or two about them, explaining to you that they were only green leaves turned blue, and that it was of no consequence whether they were either; and that, as flowers, they were scientifically to be considered as not in existence,—you will, I fear, throw my letter, even though it has cost you sevenpence, aside at once, when I remark to you that these wood hyacinths of Bagley have something to do with the battle of Marathon, and if you knew it, are of more vital interest to you than even the Match Tax.

Nevertheless, as I shall feel it my duty, some day, to speak to you of Theseus and his vegetable soup, so, to-day, I think it necessary to tell you that the wood-hyacinth is the best English representative of the tribe of flowers which the Greeks called "Asphodel," and which they thought the heroes who had fallen in the battle of Marathon, or in any other battle, fought in just quarrel, were to be

rewarded, and enough rewarded, by living in fields-full of; fields called, by them, Elysian, or the Fields of Coming, as you and I talk of the good time 'Coming,' though with perhaps different views as to the nature of the to be expected goodness.

Now what the Chancellor of the Exchequer said the other day to the Civil Engineers (see *Saturday Review*, April 29th,) is entirely true; namely, that in any of our colliery or cartridge-manufactory explosions, we send as many men (or women) into Elysium as were likely to get there after the battle of Marathon;* and that is, indeed, like the rest of our economic arrangements, very fine, and pleasant to think upon; neither may it be doubted, on modern principles of religion and equality, that every collier and cartridge-filler is as fit for Elysium as any heathen could be; and that in all these respects the battle of Marathon is no more deserving of English notice. But what I want you to reflect upon, as of moment to you, is whether you *really* care for the hyacinthine Elysium you are going to? and if you do, why you should not live a little while in Elysium here, instead of waiting so patiently, and working so hardly, to be blown or flattened into it? The hyacinths will grow well enough on the top of the ground, if you will leave off digging away the bottom of it; and another plant of the asphodel

* Of course this was written, and in type, before the late catastrophe in Paris; and the one at Dunkirk is, I suppose, long since forgotten, much more our own good beginning at—Birmingham—was it? I forget, myself, now.

species, which the Greeks thought of more importance even than hyacinths—onions; though, indeed, one dead hero is represented by Lucian as finding something to complain of even in Elysium, because he got nothing but onions there to eat. But it is simply, I assure you, because the French did not understand that hyacinths and onions were the principal things to fill their existing Elysian Fields, or Champs Elysées, with, but chose to have carriages, and roundabouts, instead, that a tax on matches in those fields would be, nowadays, so much more productive than one on Asphodel; and I see that only a day or two since even a poor Punch's show could not play out its play in Elysian peace, but had its corner knocked off by a shell from Mont Valérien, and the dog Toby "seriously alarmed."

One more instance of the things you don't care for, that are vital to you, may be better told now than hereafter.

In my plan for our practical work, in last number, you remember I said, we must try and make some pottery, and have some music, and that we would have no steam engines. On this I received a singular letter from a resident at Birmingham, advising me that the colours for my pottery must be ground by steam, and my musical instruments constructed by it. To this, as my correspondent was an educated person, and knew Latin, I ventured to answer that porcelain had been painted before the time of James Watt; that even music was not entirely a recent

invention; that my poor company, I feared, would deserve no better colours than Apelles and Titian made shift with, or even the Chinese; and that I could not find any notice of musical instruments in the time of David, for instance, having been made by steam.

To this my correspondent again replied that he supposed David's "twangling upon the harp" would have been unsatisfactory to modern taste; in which sentiment I concurred with him, (thinking of the Cumberland procession, without dancing, after its sacred, cylindrical Ark). We shall have to be content, however, for our part, with a little "twangling" on such roughly-made harps, or even shells, as the Jews and Greeks got their melody out of, though it must indeed be little conceivable in a modern manufacturing town that a nation could ever have existed which imaginarily dined on onions in Heaven, and made harps of the near relations of turtles on Earth. But to keep to our crockery, you know I told you that for some time we should not be able to put any pictures of Gods on it; and you might think that would be of small consequence: but it is of moment that we should at least try—for indeed that old French potter, Palissy, was nearly the last of potters in France, or England either, who could have done so, if anybody had wanted Gods. But nobody in his time did;—they only wanted Goddesses, of a demi-divine-monde pattern; Palissy, not well able to produce such, took to moulding innocent frogs and vipers instead, in his dishes; but at Sèvres and

other places for shaping of courtly clay, the charmingest things were done, as you probably saw at the great peace-promoting Exhibition of 1851; and not only the first rough potter's fields, tileries, as they called them, or Tuileries, but the little den where Palissy long after worked under the Louvre, were effaced and forgotten in the glory of the House of France; until the House of France forgot also that to it, no less than the House of Israel, the words were spoken, not by a painted God, "As the clay is in the hands of the potter, so are ye in mine;" and thus the stained and vitrified show of it lasted, as you have seen, until the Tuileries again became the Potter's field, to bury, not strangers in, but their own souls, no more ashamed of Traitorhood, but invoking Traitorhood, as if it covered, instead of constituting, uttermost shame;—until, of the kingdom and its glory there is not a shard left, to take fire out of the hearth.

Left—to men's eyes, I should have written. To their thoughts, is left yet much; for true kingdoms and true glories cannot pass away. What France has had of such, remain to her. What any of us can find of such, will remain to us. Will you look back, for an instant, again to the end of my last Letter, and consider the state of life described there:—"No liberty, but instant obedience to known law and appointed persons; no equality, but recognition of every betterness and reprobation of every worseness; and none idle but the dead."

I beg you to observe that last condition especially.

You will debate for many a day to come the causes that have brought this misery upon France, and there are many; but one is chief—chief cause, now and always, of evil everywhere; and I see it at this moment, in its deadliest form, out of the window of my quiet English inn. It is the 21st of May, and a bright morning, and the sun shines, for once, warmly on the wall opposite, a low one, of ornamental pattern, imitative in brick of wood-work (as if it had been of wood-work, it would, doubtless, have been painted to look like brick). Against this low decorative edifice leans a ruddy-faced English boy of seventeen or eighteen, in a white blouse and brown corduroy trousers, and a domical felt hat; with the sun, as much as can get under the rim, on his face, and his hands in his pockets; listlessly watching two dogs at play. He is a good boy, evidently, and does not care to turn the play into a fight;* still it is not interesting enough to him, as play, to relieve the extreme distress of his idleness, and he occasionally takes his hands out of his pockets, and claps them at the dogs, to startle them.

The ornamental wall he leans against surrounds the county police-office, and the residence at the end of it, appropriately called "Gaol Lodge." This county gaol, police-office, and a large gasometer, have been built by the good people of Abingdon to adorn the principal entrance to their town from the

* This was at seven in the morning; he had them fighting at half-past nine.

south. It was once quite one of the loveliest, as well as historically interesting, scenes in England. A few cottages and their gardens, sloping down to the river-side, are still left, and an arch or two of the great monastery; but the principal object from the road is now the gaol, and from the river the gasometer. It is curious that since the English have believed (as you will find the editor of the *Liverpool Daily Post*, quoting to you from Macaulay, in his leader of the 9th of this month), "the only cure for Liberty is more liberty," (which is true enough, for when you have got all you can, you will be past physic,) they always make their gaols conspicuous and ornamental. Now I have no objection, myself, detesting, as I do, every approach to liberty, to a distinct manifestation of gaol, in proper quarters; nay, in the highest, and in the close neighbourhood of palaces; perhaps, even, with a convenient passage, and Ponte de' Sospiri, from one to the other, or, at least, a pleasant access by water-gate and down the river; but I do not see why in these days of 'incurable' liberty, the prospect in approaching a quiet English county town should be a gaol, and nothing else.

That being so, however, the country boy, in his white blouse, leans placidly against the prison wall this bright Sunday morning, little thinking what a luminous sign-post he is making of himself, and living gnomon of sun-dial, of which the shadow points sharply to the subtlest cause of the fall of France, and of England, as is too likely, after her.

Your hands in your own pockets, in the morning.

That is the beginning of the last day; your hands in other people's pockets at noon; that is the height of the last day; and the gaol, ornamented or otherwise (assuredly the great gaol of the grave), for the night. That is the history of nations under judgment. Don't think I say this to any single class; least of all specially to you; the rich are continually, nowadays, reproaching you with your wish to be idle. It is very wrong of you; but, do they want to work all day, themselves? All mouths are very properly open now against the Paris Communists because they fight that they may get wages for marching about with flags. What do the upper classes fight for, then? What have they fought for since the world became upper and lower, but that they also might have wages for walking about with flags, and that mischievously? It is very wrong of the Communists to steal church-plate and candlesticks. Very wrong indeed; and much good may they get of their pawnbrokers' tickets. Have you any notion (I mean that you shall have some soon) how much the fathers and fathers' fathers of these men, for a thousand years back, have paid their priests, to keep them in plate and candlesticks? You need not think I am a republican, or that I like to see priests ill-treated, and their candlesticks carried off. I have many friends among priests, and should have had more had I not long been trying to make them see that they have long trusted too much in candlesticks, not quite enough in candles; not at all enough in the sun, and least of all enough in the sun's Maker.

Scientific people indeed of late opine the sun to have been produced by collision, and to be a spendidly permanent railroad accident, or explosive Elysium: also I noticed, only yesterday, that gravitation itself is announced to the members of the Royal Institution as the result of vibratory motion. Some day, perhaps, the members of the Royal Institution will proceed to inquire after the cause of—vibratory motion. Be that as it may, the Beginning, or Prince of Vibration, as modern science has it,—Prince of Peace, as old science had it,—continues through all scientific analysis, His own arrangements about the sun, as also about other lights, lately hidden or burning low. And these are primarily, that He has appointed a great power to rise and set in heaven, which gives life, and warmth, and motion, to the bodies of men, and beasts, creeping things, and flowers; and which also causes light and colour in the eyes of things that have eyes. And He has set above the souls of men, on earth, a great law or Sun of Justice or Righteousness, which brings also life and health in the daily strength and spreading of it, being spoken of in the priest's language, (which they never explained to anybody, and now wonder that nobody understands,) as having "healing in its wings:" and the obedience to this law, as it gives strength to the heart, so it gives light to the eyes of souls that have got any eyes, so that they begin to see each other as lovely, and to love each other. That is the final law respecting the sun, and all manner of minor lights and candles,

down to rushlights; and I once got it fairly explained, two years ago, to an intelligent and obliging wax-and-tallow chandler at Abbeville, in whose shop I used to sit sketching in rainy days; and watching the cartloads of ornamental candles which he used to supply for the church at the far east end of the town, (I forget what saint it belongs to, but it is opposite the late Emperor's large new cavalry barracks,) where the young ladies of the better class in Abbeville had just got up a beautiful evening service, with a pyramid of candles which it took at least half an hour to light, and as long to put out again, and which, when lighted up to the top of the church, were only to be looked at themselves, and sung to, and not to light anybody or anything. I got the tallow-chandler to calculate vaguely the probable cost of the candles lighted in this manner, every day, in all the churches of France; and then I asked him how many cottagers' wives he knew round Abbeville itself who could afford, without pinching, either dip or mould in the evening to make their children's clothes by, and whether, if the pink and green beeswax of the district were divided every afternoon among them, it might not be quite as honourable to God, and as good for the candle trade? Which he admitted readily enough; but what I should have tried to convince the young ladies themselves of, at the evening service, would probably not have been admitted so readily;—that they themselves were nothing more than an

extremely graceful kind of wax-tapers which had got into their heads that they were only to be looked at, for the honour of God, and not to light anybody.

Which is indeed too much the notion of even the masculine aristocracy of Europe at this day. One can imagine them, indeed, modest in the matter of their own luminousness, and more timid of the tax on agricultural horses and carts, than of that on lucifers; but it would be well if they were content, here in England, however dimly phosphorescent themselves, to bask in the sunshine of May at the end of Westminster Bridge, (as my boy on Abingdon Bridge,) with their backs against the large edifice they have built there,—an edifice, by the way, to my own poor judgment, less contributing to the adornment of London, than the new police-office to that of Abingdon. But the English squire, after his fashion, sends himself to that highly decorated gaol all spring-time; and cannot be content with his hands in his own pockets, nor even in yours and mine; but claps and laughs, semi-idiot that he is, at dog-fights on the floor of the House, which, if he knew it, are indeed dog-fights of the Stars in their courses, Sirius against Procyon; and of the havock and loosed dogs of war, makes, as the *Times* correspondent says they make, at Versailles, of the siege of Paris, "the Entertainment of the Hour."

You think that, perhaps, an unjust saying of him, as he will, assuredly, himself. He would fain put an end to this wild work, if he could, he thinks.

My friends, I tell you solemnly, the sin of it all, down to this last night's doing, or undoing, (for it is Monday now, I waited before finishing my letter, to see if the Sainte Chapelle would follow the Vendôme Column;) the sin of it, I tell you, is not that poor rabble's, spade and pickaxe in hand among the dead; nor yet the blasphemer's, making noise like a dog by the defiled altars of our Lady of Victories; and round the barricades, and the ruins, of the Street of Peace.

This cruelty has been done by the kindest of us, and the most honourable; by the delicate women, by the nobly-nurtured men, who through their happy and, as they thought, holy lives, have sought, and still seek, only "the entertainment of the hour." And this robbery has been taught to the hands,—this blasphemy to the lips,—of the lost poor, by the False Prophets who have taken the name of Christ in vain, and leagued themselves with His chief enemy, "Covetousness, which is idolatry."

Covetousness, lady of Competition and of deadly Care; idol above the altars of Ignoble Victory; builder of streets, in cities of Ignoble Peace. I have given you the picture of her—your goddess and only Hope—as Giotto saw her; dominant in prosperous Italy as in prosperous England, and having her hands clawed then, as now, so that she can only clutch, not work; also you shall read next month with me what one of Giotto's friends says of her—a rude versifier, one of the twangling harpers; as Giotto was a poor painter for low price, and with

colours ground by hand; but such cheap work must serve our turn for this time; also, here, is portrayed for you* one of the ministering angels of the goddess; for she herself, having ears set wide to the wind, is careful to have wind-instruments provided by her servants for other people's ears.

This servant of hers was drawn by the court portrait-painter, Holbein; and was a councillor at poor-law boards, in his day; counselling then, as some of us have, since, "Bread of Affliction and Water of Affliction" for the vagrant as such,—which is, indeed, good advice, if you are quite sure

* Engraved, as also the woodcut in the April number, carefully after Holbein, by my coal-waggon-assisting assistant: but he has missed his mark somewhat, here; the imp's abortive hands, hooked processes only, like Envy's, and pterodactylous, are scarcely seen in their clutch of the bellows, and there are other faults. We will do it better for you, afterwards.

the vagrant has, or may have, a home; not otherwise. But we will talk further of this next month, taking into council one of Holbein's prosaic friends, as well as that singing friend of Giotto's—an English lawyer and country gentleman, living on his farm, at Chelsea (somewhere near Cheyne Row, I believe)—and not unfrequently visited there by the King of England, who would ask himself unexpectedly to dinner at the little Thames-side farm, though the floor of it was only strewn with green rushes. It was burnt at last, rushes, ricks, and all; some said because bread of affliction and water of affliction had been served to heretics there, its master being a stout Catholic; and, singularly enough, also a Communist; so that because of the fire, and other matters, the King at last ceased to dine at Chelsea. We will have some talk, however, with the farmer, ourselves, some day soon; meantime and always, believe me,

Faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

## POSTSCRIPT

25*th May (early morning)*.—Reuter's final telegram, in the *Echo* of last night, being, "The Louvre and the Tuileries are in flames, the Federals having set fire to them with petroleum," it is interesting to observe how, in fulfilment of the Mechanical Glories of our age, its ingenious Gomorrah manufactures, and supplies to demand, her own brimstone; achieving also a quite scientific, instead of miraculous, descent of it from Heaven; and ascent of it, where required, without any need of cleaving or quaking of earth, except in a superficially 'vibratory' manner.

Nor can it be less encouraging to you to see how, with a sufficiently curative quantity of Liberty, you may defend yourselves against all danger of overproduction, especially in art; but, in case you should ever wish to re-'produce' any of the combustibles (as oil, or canvas) used in these Parisian Economies, you will do well to inquire of the author of the "Essay on Liberty" whether he considers oil of linseed, or petroleum, as best fulfilling his definition, "utilities fixed and embodied in material objects."

CHARITY

*Drawn thus by* GIOTTO, *in the Chapel of the Arena at* PADUA.

## LETTER VII

*CHARITIES*

DENMARK HILL,
*1st July*, 1871.

MY FRIENDS,

IT seldom chances, my work lying chiefly among stones, clouds, and flowers, that I am brought into any freedom of intercourse with my fellow-creatures; but since the fighting in Paris I have dined out several times, and spoken to the persons who sat next me, and to others when I went upstairs; and done the best I could to find out what people thought about the fighting, or thought they ought to think about it, or thought they ought to say. I had, of course, no hope of finding any one thinking what they ought to do. But I have not yet, a little to my surprise, met with any one who either appeared to be sadder, or professed himself wiser, for anything that has happened.

It is true that I am neither sadder nor wiser, because of it, myself. But then I was so sad before, that nothing could make me sadder; and getting wiser has always been to me a very slow process, —(sometimes even quite stopping for whole days together),—so that if two or three new ideas fall in my way at once, it only puzzles me; and the

fighting in Paris has given me more than two or three.

The newest of all these new ones, and, in fact, quite a glistering and freshly minted idea to me, is the Parisian notion of Communism, as far as I understand it, (which I don't profess to do altogether, yet, or I should be wiser than I was, with a vengeance).

For, indeed, I am myself a Communist of the old school—reddest also of the red; and was on the very point of saying so at the end of my last letter; only the telegram about the Louvre's being on fire stopped me, because I thought the Communists of the new school, as I could not at all understand them, might not quite understand me. For we Communists of the old school think that our property belongs to everybody, and everybody's property to us; so of course I thought the Louvre belonged to me as much as to the Parisians, and expected they would have sent word over to me, being an Art Professor, to ask whether I wanted it burnt down. But no message or intimation to that effect ever reached me.

Then the next bit of new coinage in the way of notion which I have picked up in Paris streets, is the present meaning of the French word 'Ouvrier,' which in my time the dictionaries used to give as 'Workman,' or 'Working-man.' For again, I have spent many days, not to say years, with the working-men of our English school myself; and I know that, with the more advanced of them, the

gathering word is that which I gave you at the end of my second number—"To do good work, whether we live or die." Whereas I perceive the gathering, or rather scattering, word of the French 'ouvrier' is, 'To *undo* good work, whether we live or die.'

And this is the third, and the last, I will tell you for the present, of my new ideas, but a troublesome one: namely, that we are henceforward to have a duplicate power of political economy; and that the new Parisian expression for its first principle is not to be 'laissez faire,' but 'laissez *re*faire.'

I cannot, however, make anything of these new French fashions of thought till I have looked at them quietly a little; so to-day I will content myself with telling you what we Communists of the old school meant by Communism; and it will be worth your hearing, for—I tell you simply in my 'arrogant' way—we know, and have known, what Communism is—for our fathers knew it, and told us, three thousand years ago; while you baby Communists do not so much as know what the name means, in your own English or French—no, not so much as whether a House of Commons implies, or does not imply, also a House of Uncommons; nor whether the Holiness of the Commune, which Garibaldi came to fight for, had any relation to the Holiness of the 'Communion' which he came to fight against.

Will you be at the pains, now, however, to learn

rightly, and once for all, what Communism is? First, it means that everybody must work in common, and do common or simple work for his dinner; and that if any man will not do it, he must not have his dinner. That much, perhaps, you thought you knew?—but you did not think we Communists of the old school knew it also? You shall have it, then, in the words of the Chelsea farmer and stout Catholic, I was telling you of, in last number. He was born in Milk Street, London, three hundred and ninety-one years ago, (1480, a year I have just been telling my Oxford pupils to remember for manifold reasons,) and he planned a Commune flowing with milk and honey, and otherwise Elysian; and called it the 'Place of Wellbeing,' or Utopia; which is a word you perhaps have occasionally used before now, like others, without understanding it;—(in the article of the *Liverpool Daily Post* before referred to, it occurs felicitously seven times). You shall use it in that stupid way no more, if I can help it. Listen how matters really are managed there.

"The chief, and almost the only business of the government,* is to take care that no man may live idle, but that every one may follow his trade diligently: yet they do not wear themselves out with perpetual toil from morning till night, as if they

* I spare you, for once, a word for 'government' used by this old author, which would have been unintelligible to you, and is so, except in its general sense, to me, too.

were beasts of burden, which, as it is indeed a heavy slavery, so it is everywhere the common course of life amongst all mechanics except the Utopians; but they, dividing the day and night into twenty-four hours, appoint six of these for work, three of which are before dinner and three after; they then sup, and, at eight o'clock, counting from noon, go to bed and sleep eight hours: the rest of their time, besides that taken up in work, eating, and sleeping, is left to every man's discretion; yet they are not to abuse that interval to luxury and idleness, but must employ it in some proper exercise, according to their various inclinations, which is, for the most part, reading.

"But the time appointed for labour is to be narrowly examined, otherwise, you may imagine that, since there are only six hours appointed for work, they may fall under a scarcity of necessary provisions: but it is so far from being true that this time is not sufficient for supplying them with plenty of all things, either necessary or convenient, that it is rather too much; and this you will easily apprehend, if you consider how great a part of all other nations is quite idle. First, women generally do little, who are the half of mankind; and, if some few women are diligent, their husbands are idle: then,— . . . . ."

What then?

We will stop a minute, friends, if you please, for I want you, before you read what then, to be once more made fully aware that this farmer who is

speaking to you is one of the sternest Roman Catholics of his stern time; and at the fall of Cardinal Wolsey, became Lord High Chancellor of England in his stead.

"—then, consider the great company of idle priests, and of those that are called religious men; add to these, all rich men, chiefly those that have estates in land, who are called noblemen and gentlemen, together with their families, made up of idle persons, that are kept more for show than use; add to these, all those strong and lusty beggars that go about, pretending some disease in excuse for their begging; and, upon the whole account, you will find that the number of those by whose labours mankind is supplied is much less than you, perhaps, imagined: then, consider how few of those that work are employed in labours that are of real service! for we, who measure all things by money, give rise to many trades that are both vain and superfluous, and serve only to support riot and luxury: for if those who work were employed only in such things as the conveniences of life require, there would be such an abundance of them, *that the prices of them would so sink that tradesmen could not be maintained by their gains;*"- (italics mine—Fair and softly, Sir Thomas! we must have a shop round the corner, and a pedlar or two on fair-days, yet;)—"if all those who labour about useless things were set to more profitable employments, and if all that languish out their lives in sloth and idleness (every one of whom consumes as much as any two of the men that are at work) were

forced to labour, you may easily imagine that a small proportion of time would serve for doing all that is either necessary, profitable, or pleasant to mankind, especially while pleasure is kept within its due bounds: this appears very plainly in Utopia; for there, in a great city, and in all the territory that lies round it, you can scarce find five hundred, either men or women, by their age and strength capable of labour, that are not engaged in it! even the heads of government, though excused by the law, yet do not excuse themselves, but work, that, by their examples, they may excite the industry of the rest of the people."

You see, therefore, that there is never any fear, among us of the old school, of being out of work; but there is great fear, among many of us, lest we should not do the work set us well; for, indeed, we thorough-going Communists make it a part of our daily duty to consider how common we are; and how few of us have any brains or souls worth speaking of, or fit to trust to;—that being the, alas, almost unexceptionable lot of human creatures. Not that we think ourselves, (still less, call ourselves without thinking so,) miserable sinners, for we are not in anywise miserable, but quite comfortable for the most part; and we are not sinners, that we know of; but are leading godly, righteous, and sober lives, to the best of our power, since last Sunday; (on which day some of us were, we regret to be informed, drunk;) but we are of course common creatures enough, the most of us, and thankful if we may be

gathered up in St. Peter's sheet, so as not to be uncivilly or unjustly called unclean too. And therefore our chief concern is to find out any among us wiser and of better make than the rest, and to get them, if they will for any persuasion take the trouble, to rule over us, and teach us how to behave, and make the most of what little good is in us.

So much for the first law of old Communism, respecting work. Then the second respects property, and it is that the public, or common, wealth, shall be more and statelier in all its substance than private or singular wealth; that is to say (to come to my own special business for a moment) that there shall be only cheap and few pictures, if any, in the insides of houses, where nobody but the owner can see them; but costly pictures, and many, on the outsides of houses, where the people can see them: also that the Hôtel-de-Ville, or Hotel of the whole Town, for the transaction of its common business, shall be a magnificent building, much rejoiced in by the people, and with its towers seen far away through the clear air; but that the hotels for private business or pleasure, cafés, taverns, and the like, shall be low, few, plain, and in back streets; more especially such as furnish singular and uncommon drinks and refreshments; but that the fountains which furnish the people's common drink shall be very lovely and stately, and adorned with precious marbles, and the like. Then farther, according to old Communism, the private dwellings of uncommon persons—dukes and lords—are to be very simple, and roughly put together,—

such persons being supposed to be above all care for things that please the commonalty; but the buildings for public or common service, more especially schools, almshouses, and workhouses, are to be externally of a majestic character, as being for noble purposes and charities; and in their interiors furnished with many luxuries for the poor and sick. And, finally and chiefly, it is an absolute law of old Communism that the fortunes of private persons should be small, and of little account in the State; but the common treasure of the whole nation should be of superb and precious things in redundant quantity, as pictures, statues, precious books; gold and silver vessels, preserved from ancient times; gold and silver bullion laid up for use, in case of any chance need of buying anything suddenly from foreign nations; noble horses, cattle, and sheep, on the public lands; and vast spaces of land for culture, exercise, and garden, round the cities, full of flowers, which, being everybody's property, nobody could gather; and of birds which, being everybody's property, nobody could shoot. And, in a word, that instead of a common poverty, or national debt, which every poor person in the nation is taxed annually to fulfil his part of, there should be a common wealth, or national reverse of debt, consisting of pleasant things, which every poor person in the nation should be summoned to receive his dole of, annually; and of pretty things, which every person capable of admiration, foreigners as well as natives, should unfeignedly admire, in an æsthetic, and not a covetous manner (though for my

own part I can't understand what it is that I am taxed now to defend, or what foreign nations are supposed to covet, here). But truly, a nation that has got anything to defend of real public interest, can usually hold it; and a fat Latin communist gave for sign of the strength of his commonalty, in its strongest time,—

> "Privatus illis census erat brevis,
> Commune magnum;"

which you may get any of your boys or girls to translate for you, and remember; remembering, also, that the commonalty or publicity depends for its goodness on the nature of the *thing* that is common, and that is public. When the French cried, "Vive la République!" after the battle of Sedan, they were thinking only of the Publique, in the word, and not of the Ré in it. But that is the essential part of it, for that "Ré" is not like the mischievous Re in Reform, and Refaire, which the words had better be without; but it is short for *res*, which means 'thing'; and when you cry, "Live the Republic," the question is mainly, what thing it is you wish to be publicly alive, and whether you are striving for a Common-Wealth, and Public-Thing; or, as too plainly in Paris, for a Common-Illth, and Public-Nothing, or even Public-Less-than-nothing and Common Deficit.

Now all these laws respecting public and private property, are accepted in the same terms by the entire body of us Communists of the old school; but with respect to the management of both, we old

Reds fall into two classes, differing, not indeed in colour of redness, but in depth of tint of it—one class being, as it were, only of a delicately pink, peach-blossom, or dog-rose redness; but the other, to which I myself do partly, and desire wholly, to belong, as I told you, reddest of the red—that is to say, full crimson, or even dark crimson, passing into that deep colour of the blood which made the Spaniards call it blue, instead of red, and which the Greeks call φοινίκεος, being an intense phœnix or flamingo colour: and this not merely, as in the flamingo feathers, a colour on the outside, but going through and through, ruby-wise; so that Dante, who is one of the few people who have ever beheld our queen full in the face, says of her that, if she had been in a fire, he could not have seen her at all, so fire-colour she was, all through.*

And between these two sects or shades of us, there is this difference in our way of holding our common faith, (that our neighbour's property is ours, and ours his,) namely, that the rose-red division of us are content in their diligence of care to preserve or guard from injury or loss their neighbours' property, as their own; so that they may be called, not merely dog-rose red, but even 'watch-dog-rose' red; being, indeed, more careful and anxious for the safety of the possessions of other people, (especially their masters,) than for any of

* "Tanto rossa, ch' appena fora dentro al fuoco nota."—*Purg.*, xxix. 122.

their own; and also more sorrowful for any wound or harm suffered by any creature in their sight, than for hurt to themselves. So that they are Communists, even less in their having part in all common well-being of their neighbours, than part in all common pain: being yet, on the whole, infinite gainers; for there is in this world infinitely more joy than pain to be shared, if you will only take your share when it is set for you.

The vermilion, or Tyrian-red sect of us, however, are not content merely with this carefulness and watchfulness over our neighbours' good, but we cannot rest unless we are giving what we can spare of our own; and the more precious it is, the more we want to divide it with somebody. So that above all things, in what we value most of possessions, pleasant sights, and true knowledge, we cannot relish seeing any pretty things unless other people see them also; neither can we be content to know anything for ourselves, but must contrive, somehow, to make it known to others.

And as thus especially we like to give knowledge away, so we like to have it good to give, (for, as for selling knowledge, thinking it comes by the Spirit of Heaven, we hold the selling of it to be only a way of selling God again, and utterly Iscariot's business;) also, we know that the knowledge made up for sale is apt to be watered and dusted, or even itself good for nothing; and we try, for our part, to get it, and give it, pure: the mere fact that it is to be given away at once to anybody who asks to

have it, and immediately wants to use it, is a continual check upon us. For instance, when Colonel North, in the House of Commons, on the 20th of last month, (as reported in the *Times*,) "would simply observe, in conclusion, that it was impossible to tell how many thousands of the young men who were to be embarked for India next September, would be marched, not to the hills, but to their graves;" any of us Tyrian-reds "would simply observe" that the young men themselves ought to be constantly, and on principle, informed of their destination before embarking; and that this pleasant communicativeness of what knowledge on the subject was to be got, would soon render quite possible the attainment of more. So also, in abstract science, the instant habit of making true discoveries common property, cures us of a bad trick which one may notice to have much hindered scientific persons lately, of rather spending their time in hiding their neighbours' discoveries, than improving their own: whereas, among us, scientific flamingoes are not only openly graced for discoveries, but openly disgraced for coveries; and that sharply and permanently; so that there is rarely a hint or thought among them of each other's being wrong, but quick confession of whatever is found out rightly.*

* Confession always a little painful, however; scientific envy being the most difficult of all to conquer. I find I did much injustice to the botanical lecturer, as well as to my friend, in my last letter; and, indeed, suspected as much at the time; but having

But the point in which we dark-red Communists differ most from other people is, that we dread, above all things, getting miserly of virtue; and if there be any in us, or among us, we try forthwith to get it made common, and would fain hear the mob crying for some of that treasure, where it seems to have accumulated. I say, 'seems,' only: for though, at first, all the finest virtue looks as if it were laid up with the rich, (so that, generally, a millionaire would be much surprised at hearing that his daughter had made a *pétroleuse* of herself, or that his son had murdered anybody for the sake of their watch and cravat),—it is not at all clear to us dark-reds that this virtue, proportionate to income, is of the right sort; and we believe that even if it were, the people who keep it thus all to themselves, and leave the so-called *canaille* without any, vitiate what they keep by keeping it, so that it is like manna laid up through the night, which breeds worms in the morning.

You see, also, that we dark-red Communists, since we exist only in giving, must, on the contrary, hate with a perfect hatred all manner of thieving: even to Cœur-de-Lion's tar-and-feather extreme; and of all thieving, we dislike thieving on trust most, (so that, if we ever get to be strong enough

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some botanical notions myself, which I am vain of, I wanted the lecturer's to be wrong, and stopped cross-examining my friend as soon as I had got what suited me. Nevertheless, the general statement that follows, remember, rests on no tea-table chat; and the tea-table chat itself is accurate, as far as it goes.

to do what we want, and chance to catch hold of any failed bankers, their necks will not be worth half an hour's purchase). So also, as we think virtue diminishes in the honour and force of it in proportion to income, we think vice increases in the force and shame of it, and is worse in kings and rich people than in poor; and worse on a large scale than on a narrow one; and worse when deliberate than hasty. So that we can understand one man's coveting a piece of vineyard-ground for a garden of herbs, and stoning the master of it, (both of them being Jews;)—and yet the dogs ate queen's flesh for that, and licked king's blood! but for two nations —both Christians—to covet their neighbour's vineyards, all down beside the River of their border, and slay until the River itself runs red! The little pool of Samaria!—shall all the snows of the Alps, or the salt pool of the Great Sea, wash their armour, for these?

I promised in my last letter that I would tell you the main meaning and bearing of the war, and its results to this day:—now that you know what Communism is, I can tell you these briefly, and, what is more to the purpose, how to bear yourself in the midst of them.

The first reason for all wars, and for the necessity of national defences, is that the majority of persons, high and low, in all European nations, are Thieves, and, in their hearts, greedy of their neighbours' goods, land, and fame.

But besides being Thieves, they are also fools,

and have never yet been able to understand that if Cornish men want pippins cheap, they must not ravage Devonshire—that the prosperity of their neighbours is, in the end, their own also; and the poverty of their neighbours, by the communism of God, becomes also in the end their own. 'Invidia,' jealousy of your neighbour's good, has been, since dust was first made flesh, the curse of man; and 'Charitas,' the desire to do your neighbour grace, the one source of all human glory, power, and material Blessing.

But war between nations (fools and thieves though they be,) is not necessarily in all respects evil. I gave you that long extract from Froissart to show you, mainly, that Theft in its simplicity—however sharp and rude, yet if frankly done, and bravely—does not corrupt men's souls; and they can, in a foolish, but quite vital and faithful way, keep the feast of the Virgin Mary in the midst of it.

But Occult Theft,—Theft which hides itself even from itself, and is legal, respectable, and cowardly, —corrupts the body and soul of man, to the last fibre of them. And the guilty Thieves of Europe, the real sources of all deadly war in it, are the Capitalists—that is to say, people who live by percentages on the labour of others; instead of by fair wages for their own. The *Real* war in Europe, of which this fighting in Paris is the Inauguration, is between these and the workmen, such as these have made him. They have kept him poor, ignorant, and sinful, that they might, without his knowledge, gather

for themselves the produce of his toil. At last, a dim insight into the fact of this dawns on him; and such as they have made him he meets them, and *will* meet.

Nay, the time is even come when he will study that Meteorological question, suggested by the *Spectator*, formerly quoted, of the Filtration of Money from above downwards.

"It was one of the many delusions of the Commune," (says to-day's *Telegraph*, 24th June,) "that it could do without rich consumers." Well, such unconsumed existence would be very wonderful! Yet it is, to me also, conceivable. Without the riches,—no; but without the consumers?—possibly! It is occurring to the minds of the workmen that these Golden Fleeces must get their dew from somewhere. "Shall there be dew upon the fleece only?" they ask:—and will be answered. They cannot do without these long purses, say you? No; but they want to find where the long purses are filled. Nay, even their trying to burn the Louvre, without reference to Art Professors, had a ray of meaning in it—quite Spectatorial.

"If we must choose between a Titian and a Lancashire cotton-mill," (wrote the *Spectator* of August 6th, last year, instructing me in political economy, just as the war was beginning,) "in the name of manhood and morality, give us the cotton-mill."

So thinks the French workman also, energetically; only *his* mill is not to be in Lancashire. Both French and English agree to have no more Titians,

—it is well,—but which is to have the Cotton-Mill?

Do you see in the *Times* of yesterday and the day before, 22nd and 23rd June, that the Minister of France dares not, even in this her utmost need, put on an income tax; and do you see why he dares not?

Observe, such a tax is the only honest and just one; because it tells on the rich in true proportion to the poor, and because it meets necessity in the shortest and bravest way, and without interfering with any commercial operation.

All rich people object to income tax, of course; —they like to pay as much as a poor man pays on their tea, sugar, and tobacco,—nothing on their incomes.

Whereas, in true justice, the only honest and wholly right tax is one not merely on income, but property; increasing in percentage as the property is greater. And the main virtue of such a tax is that it makes publicly known what every man has, and how he gets it.

For every kind of Vagabonds, high and low, agree in their dislike to give an account of the way they get their living; still less, of how much they have got sewn up in their breeches. It does not, however, matter much to a country that it should know how its poor Vagabonds live; but it is of vital moment that it should know how its rich Vagabonds live; and that much of knowledge, it seems to me, in the present state of our education, is quite attainable.

But that, when you have attained it, you may act on it wisely, the first need is that you should be sure you are living honestly yourselves. That is why I told you, in my second letter, you must learn to obey good laws before you seek to alter bad ones:—I will amplify now a little the three promises I want you to make. Look back at them.

I. You are to do good work, whether you live or die. It may be you will have to die;—well, men have died for their country often, yet doing her no good; be ready to die for her in doing her assured good: her, and all other countries with her. Mind your own business with your absolute heart and soul; but see that it is a good business first. That it *is* corn and sweet pease you are producing,—not gunpowder and arsenic. And be sure of this, literally:—*you must simply rather die than make any destroying mechanism or compound.* You are to be *literally* employed in cultivating the ground, or making useful things, and carrying them where they are wanted. Stand in the streets, and say to all who pass by: Have you any vineyard we can work in,—*not* Naboth's? In your powder and petroleum manufactory, we work no more.

I have said little to you yet of any of the pictures engraved—you perhaps think, not to the ornament of my book.

Be it so. You will find them better than ornaments in time. Notice, however, in the one I give you with this letter—the "Charity" of Giotto —the Red Queen of Dante, and ours also,—how

different his thought of her is from the common one.

Usually she is nursing children, or giving money. Giotto thinks there is little charity in nursing children;—bears and wolves do that for their little ones; and less still in giving money.

His Charity tramples upon bags of gold—has no use for them. She gives only corn and flowers; and God's angel gives *her*, not even these—but a Heart.

Giotto is quite literal in his meaning, as well as figurative. Your love is to give food and flowers, and to labour for them only.

But what are we to do against powder and petroleum, then? What men may do; not what poisonous beasts may. If a wretch spit in your face, will you answer by spitting in his?—if he throw vitriol at you, will you go to the apothecary for a bigger bottle?

There is no physical crime at this day, so far beyond pardon,—so without parallel in its untempted guilt, as the making of war-machinery, and invention of mischievous substance. Two nations may go mad, and fight like harlots—God have mercy on them;—you, who hand them carving-knives off the table, for leave to pick up a dropped sixpence, what mercy is there for *you?* We are so humane, forsooth, and so wise; and our ancestors had tar-barrels for witches; *we* will have them for everybody else, and drive the witches' trade ourselves, by daylight; we will have our

cauldrons, please Hecate, cooled (according to the Darwinian theory,) with baboon's blood, and enough of it, and sell hell-fire in the open street.

II. Seek to revenge no injury. You see now—do not you—a little more clearly why I wrote that? what strain there is on the untaught masses of you to revenge themselves, even with insane fire?

Alas, the Taught masses are strained enough also;—have you not just seen a great religious and reformed nation, with its goodly Captains,—philosophical, sentimental, domestic, evangelical,—angelical-minded altogether, and with its Lord's Prayer really quite vital to it,—come and take its neighbour nation by the throat, saying, "Pay me that thou owest"?

Seek to revenge no injury: I do not say, seek to punish no crime: look what I hinted about failed bankers. Of that hereafter.

III. Learn to obey good laws; and in a little while you will reach the better learning—how to obey good Men, who are living, breathing, unblinded law; and to subdue base and disloyal ones, recognizing in these the light, and ruling over those in the power, of the Lord of Light and Peace, whose Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, and His Kingdom from generation to generation.

Ever faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

## LETTER VIII

*NOT AS THE WORLD GIVES*

My Friends,—

I BEGIN this letter a month before it is wanted, having several matters in my mind that I would fain put into words at once. It is the first of July, and I sit down to write by the dismallest light that ever yet I wrote by; namely, the light of this midsummer morning, in mid-England, (Matlock, Derbyshire), in the year 1871.

For the sky is covered with grey cloud;—not rain-cloud, but a dry black veil, which no ray of sunshine can pierce; partly diffused in mist, feeble mist, enough to make distant objects unintelligible, yet without any substance, or wreathing, or colour of its own. And everywhere the leaves of the trees are shaking fitfully, as they do before a thunder-storm; only not violently, but enough to show the passing to and fro of a strange, bitter, blighting wind. Dismal enough, had it been the first morning of its kind that summer had sent. But during all this spring, in London, and at Oxford, through meagre March, through changelessly sullen April, through despondent May, and darkened June,

morning after morning has come grey-shrouded thus.

And it is a new thing to me, and a very dreadful one. I am fifty years old, and more; and since I was five, have gleaned the best hours of my life in the sun of spring and summer mornings; and I never saw such as these, till now.

And the scientific men are busy as ants, examining the sun, and the moon, and the seven stars, and can tell me all about *them*, I believe, by this time; and how they move, and what they are made of.

And I do not care, for my part, two copper spangles how they move, nor what they are made of. I can't move them any other way than they go, nor make them of anything else, better than they are made. But I would care much and give much, if I could be told where this bitter wind comes from, and what *it* is made of.

For, perhaps, with forethought, and fine laboratory science, one might make it of something else.

It looks partly as if it were made of poisonous smoke; very possibly it may be: there are at least two hundred furnace chimneys in a square of two miles on every side of me. But mere smoke would not blow to and fro in that wild way. It looks more to me as if it were made of dead men's souls —such of them as are not gone yet where they have to go, and may be flitting hither and thither, doubting, themselves, of the fittest place for them.

You know, if there *are* such things as souls, and if ever any of them haunt places where they have

been hurt, there must be many about us, just now, displeased enough!

You may laugh, if you like. I don't believe any one of you would like to live in a room with a murdered man in the cupboard, however well preserved chemically;—even with a sunflower growing out at the top of his head.

And I don't, myself, like living in a world with such a multitude of murdered men in the ground of it—though we *are* making heliotropes of them, and scientific flowers, that study the sun.

I wish the scientific men would let me and other people study it with our own eyes, and neither through telescopes nor heliotropes. You shall, at all events, study the rain a little, if not the sun, to-day, and settle that question we have been upon so long as to where it comes from.

All France, it seems, is in a state of enthusiastic delight and pride at the unexpected facility with which she has got into debt; and Monsieur Thiers is congratulated by all our wisest papers on his beautiful statesmanship of borrowing. I don't myself see the cleverness of it, having suffered a good deal from that kind of statesmanship in private persons: but I daresay it is as clever as anything else that statesmen do, now-a-days; only it happens to be more mischievous than most of their other doings, and I want you to understand the bearings of it.

Everybody in France who has got any money is eager to lend it to M. Thiers at five per cent. No

doubt; but who is to pay the five per cent.? It is to be "raised" by duties on this and that. Then certainly the persons who get the five per cent. will have to pay some part of these duties themselves, on their own tea and sugar, or whatever else is taxed; and this taxing will be on the whole of their trade, and on whatever they buy with the rest of their fortunes; but the five per cent. only on what they lend M. Thiers.

It is a low estimate to say the payment of duties will take off one per cent. of their five.

Practically, therefore, the arrangement is that they get four per cent. for their money, and have all the trouble of customs duties, to take from them another extra one per cent., and give it them back again. Four per cent., however, is not to be despised. But who pays *that?*

The people who have got no money to lend, pay it; the daily worker and producer pays it. Unfortunate "William," who has borrowed, in this instance, not a plane he could make planks with, but mitrailleuses and gunpowder, with which he has planed away his own farmsteads, and forests, and fair fields of corn, and having left himself desolate, now has to pay for the loan of this useful instrument, five per cent. So says the gently commercial James to him: "Not only the price of your plane, but five per cent. to me for lending it, O sweetest of Williams."

Sweet William, carrying generally more absinthe in his brains than wit, has little to say for himself,

having, indeed, wasted too much of his sweetness lately, tainted disagreeably with petroleum, on the desert air of Paris. And the people who are to get their five per cent. out of him, and roll him and suck him,—the sugar-cane of a William that he is,—how should they but think the arrangement a glorious one for the nation?

So there is great acclaim and triumphal procession of financiers! and the arrangement is made; namely, that all the poor labouring persons in France are to pay the rich idle ones five per cent. annually, on the sum of eighty millions of sterling pounds, until further notice.

But this is not all, observe. Sweet William is not altogether so soft in his rind that you can crush him without some sufficient machinery: you must have your army in good order, "to justify public confidence;" and you must get the expense of that, beside your five per cent., out of ambrosial William. He must pay the cost of his own roller.

Now, therefore, see briefly what it all comes to.

First, you spend eighty millions of money in fireworks, doing no end of damage in letting them off.

Then you borrow money, to pay the firework-maker's bill, from any gain-loving persons who have got it.

And then, dressing your bailiff's men in new red coats and cocked hats, you send them drumming and trumpeting into the fields, to take the peasants by the throat, and make them pay the interest on

what you have borrowed; and the expense of the cocked hats besides.

That is "financiering," my friends, as the mob of the money-makers understand it. And they understand it well. For that is what it always comes to, finally; taking the peasant by the throat. He *must* pay—for he only *can*. Food can only be got out of the ground, and all these devices of soldiership, and law, and arithmetic, are but ways of getting at last down to him, the furrow-driver, and snatching the roots from him as he digs.

And they have got him down, now, they think, well, for a while, poor William, after his fit of fury and petroleum: and can make their money out of him, for years to come, in the old ways.

Did you chance, my friends, any of you, to see, the other day, the 83rd number of the *Graphic*, with the picture of the Queen's concert in it? All the fine ladies sitting so trimly, and looking so sweet, and doing the whole duty of woman—wearing their fine clothes gracefully; and the pretty singer, white-throated, warbling "Home, sweet home" to them, so morally, and melodiously! Here was yet to be our ideal of virtuous life, thought the *Graphic!* Surely, we are safe back with our virtues in satin slippers and lace veils;—and our Kingdom of Heaven is come again, *with* observation, and crown diamonds of the dazzlingest. Cherubim and Seraphim in toilettes de Paris,—(bleu-de-ciel—vert d'olivier-de-Noé—mauve de colombe-fusillée,) dancing to Coote and Tinney's

band; and vulgar Hell reserved for the canaille, as heretofore! Vulgar Hell shall be didactically pourtrayed, accordingly; (see page 17,) Wickedness going its way to *its* poor Home—bitter-sweet. Ouvrier and pétroleuse—prisoners at last—glaring wild on their way to die.

Alas! of these divided races, of whom one was appointed to teach and guide the other, which has indeed sinned deepest—the unteaching, or the untaught?—which now are guiltiest—these, who perish, or those—who forget?

Ouvrier and pétroleuse; they are gone their way—to their death. But for these, the Virgin of France shall yet unfold the oriflamme above their graves, and lay her blanches lilies on their smirched dust. Yes, and for these, great Charles shall rouse his Roland, and bid him put ghostly trump to lip, and breathe a point of war; and the helmed Pucelle shall answer with a wood-note of Domrémy;—yes, and for these the Louis they mocked, like his master, shall raise his holy hands, and pray God's peace.

"Not as the world giveth." Everlasting shame only, and unrest, are the world's gifts. These Swine of the five per cent. shall share them duly.

> "La sconoscente vita, che i fe' sozzi
> Ad ogni conoscenza or li fa bruni.
>
> * * * *
>
> Che tutto l'oro, ch'e sotto la luna,
> E che già fù, di queste anime stanche
> Non poterebbe farne posar una."

"Ad ogni conoscenza bruni:" Dark to all recognition! So they would have it indeed, true of instinct. "Ce serait l'inquisition," screamed the Senate of France, threatened with income-tax and inquiry into their ways and means. Well,—what better thing could it be? Had they not been blind long enough, under their mole-hillocks, that they should shriek at the first spark of "Inquisition"? A few things might be "inquired," one should think, and answered, among honest men, now, to advantage, and openly? "Ah no—for God's sake," shrieks the Senate, "no Inquisition. If ever anybody should come to know how we live, we were disgraced for ever, honest gentlemen that we are."

Now, my friends, the first condition of all bravery is to keep out of *this* loathsomeness. If you *do* live by rapine, stand up like a man for the old law of bow and spear; but don't fall whimpering down on your belly, like Autolycus, "grovelling on the ground," when another human creature asks you how you get your daily bread, with an "Oh, that ever I was born,—here is inquisition come on me!"

The Inquisition must come. Into men's consciences, no; not now: there is little worth looking into there. But into their pockets—yes; a most practicable and beneficial inquisition, to be made thoroughly and purgatorially, once for all, and rendered unnecessary hereafter, by furnishing the relieved marsupialia with—*glass* pockets, for the future.

You know, at least, that we, in our own society,

are to have glass pockets, as we are all to give the tenth of what we have, to buy land with, so that we must every one know each other's property to a farthing. And this month I begin making up my own accounts for you, as I said I would: I could not, sooner, though I set matters in train as soon as my first letter was out, and effected (as I supposed!), in February, a sale of £14,000 worth of houses, at the West End, to Messrs. —— and ——, of —— Row.

But from then till now, I've been trying to get that piece of business settled, and until yesterday, 19th July, I have not been able.

For, first there was a mistake made by my lawyer in the list of the houses: No. 7 ought to have been No. 1. It was a sheer piece of stupidity, and ought to have been corrected by a dash of the pen; but all sorts of deeds had to be made out again, merely that they might be paid for; and it took about three months to change 7 into 1.

At last all was declared smooth again, and I thought I should get my money; but Messrs. —— never stirred. My people kept sending them letters, saying I really did want the money, though they mightn't think it. Whether they thought it or not, they took no notice of any such informal communications. I thought they were going to back out of their bargain; but my man of business at last got their guarantee for its completion.

"If they've guaranteed the payment, why don't they pay?" thought I; but still I couldn't get any

money. At last I found the lawyers on both sides were quarrelling over the stamp-duties! Nobody knew, of the whole pack of them, whether this stamp or that was the right one! and my lawyers wouldn't give an eighty-pound stamp, and theirs wouldn't be content with a twenty-pound one.

Now, you know, all this stamp business itself is merely Mr. Gladstone's * way of coming in for *his* share of the booty. I can't be allowed to sell my houses in peace, but Mr. Gladstone must have his three hundred pounds out of me, to feed his Woolwich infant with, and fire it off "with the most satisfactory result," "nothing damaged but the platform."

I am content, if only he would come and say what he wants, and take it, and get out of my sight. But not to know what he *does* want! and to keep me from getting my money at all, while his lawyers are asking which is the right stamp? I think he had better be clear on that point next time.

But here, at last, are six months come and gone, and the stamp question is—not settled, indeed, but I've undertaken to keep my man of business free of harm, if the stamps won't do; and so at last he says I'm to have my money; and I really believe, by the time this letter is out, Messrs. —— will have paid me my £14,000.

Now you know I promised you the tenth of all I

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* Of course the Prime Minister is always the *real* tax-gatherer; the Chancellor of the Exchequer is only the cat's-paw.

had, when free from incumbrances already existing on it. This first instalment of £14,000 is not all clear, for I want part of it to found a Mastership of Drawing under the Art Professorship at Oxford; which I can't do rightly for less than £5,000. But I'll count the sum left as £10,000 instead of £9,000, and that will be clear for our society, and so, you shall have a thousand pounds down, as the tenth of that, which will quit me, observe, of my pledge thus far.

A thousand *down*, I say; but down where? Where can I put it to be safe for us? You will find presently, as others come in to help us, and we get something worth taking care of, that it becomes a very curious question indeed, where we can put our money to be safe!

In the meantime, I've told my man of business to buy £1,000 consols in the names of two men of honour; the names cannot yet be certain. What remains of the round thousand shall be kept to add to next instalment. And thus begins the fund, which I think we may advisably call the "St. George's" fund. And although the interest on consols is, as I told you before, only the taxation on the British peasant continued since the Napoleon wars, still *this* little portion of his labour, the interest on our St. George's fund, will at last be saved for him, and brought back to him.

And now, if you will read over once again the end of my fifth letter, I will tell you a little more

of what we are to do with this money, as it increases.

First, let whoever gives us any, be clear in their minds that it is a Gift. It is not an Investment. It is a frank and simple gift to the British people: nothing of it is to come back to the giver.

But also, nothing of it is to be lost. The money is not to be spent in feeding Woolwich infants with gunpowder. It is to be spent in dressing the earth and keeping it,—in feeding human lips,—in clothing human bodies,—in kindling human souls.

First of all, I say, in dressing the earth. As soon as the fund reaches any sufficient amount, the Trustees shall buy with it any kind of land offered them at just price in Britain. Rock, moor, marsh, or sea-shore—it matters not what, so it be British ground, and secured to us.

Then, we will ascertain the absolute best that can be made of every acre. We will first examine what flowers and herbs it naturally bears; every wholesome flower that it will grow shall be sown in its wild places, and every kind of fruit-tree that can prosper; and arable and pasture land extended by every expedient of tillage, with humble and simple cottage dwellings under faultless sanitary regulation. Whatever piece of land we begin to work upon, we shall treat thoroughly at once, putting unlimited manual labour on it, until we have every foot of it under as strict care as a flower-garden: and the labourers shall be paid sufficient, unchanging wages; and their children educated compulsorily

in agricultural schools inland, and naval schools by the sea, the indispensable first condition of such education being that the boys learn either to ride or to sail; the girls to spin, weave, and sew, and at a proper age to cook all ordinary food exquisitely; the youth of both sexes to be disciplined daily in the strictest practice of vocal music; and for morality, to be taught gentleness to all brute creatures,—finished courtesy to each other,—to speak truth with rigid care, and to obey orders with the precision of slaves. Then, as they get older, they are to learn the natural history of the place they live in,—to know Latin, boys and girls both,—and the history of five cities: Athens, Rome, Venice, Florence, and London.

Now, as I told you in my fifth letter, to what extent I may be able to carry this plan into execution, I know not; but to *some* visible extent, with my own single hand, I can and will, if I live. Nor do I doubt but that I shall find help enough, as soon as the full action of the system is seen, and ever so little a space of rightly cultivated ground in perfect beauty, with inhabitants in peace of heart, of whom none

"Doluit miserans inopem, aut invidit habenti."

Such a life we have lately been taught by vile persons to think impossible; so far from being impossible, it *has* been the actual life of all glorious human states in their origin.

"Hanc olim veteres vitam coluere Sabini;
Hanc Remus et frater; sic fortis Etruria crevit;
Scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma."

But, had it never been endeavoured until now, we might yet learn to hope for its unimagined good by considering what it has been possible for us to reach of unimagined evil. Utopia and its benediction are probable and simple things, compared to the Kakotopia and its curse, which we have seen actually fulfilled. We have seen the city of Paris (what miracle can be thought of beyond this?) with her own forts raining ruin on her palaces, and her young children casting fire into the streets in which they had been born; but we have not faith enough in heaven to imagine the reverse of this, or the building of any city whose streets shall be full of innocent boys and girls playing in the midst thereof.

My friends, you have trusted, in your time, too many idle words. Read now these following, not idle ones; and remember *them;* and trust them, for they are true:—

"Oh, thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.

"And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

"In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. . . .

"Whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. . . .

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

Remember only that in this now antiquated translation, "righteousness" means, accurately and simply, "justice," and is the eternal law of right, obeyed alike in the great times of each state, by Jew, Greek, and Roman. In my next letter, we will examine into the nature of this justice, and of its relation to Governments that deserve the name.

And so believe me

Faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

## LETTER IX

### *HONOUR TO WHOM HONOUR*

DENMARK HILL,
*1st September*, 1871.

MY FRIENDS,—

AS the design which I had in view when I began these letters (and many a year before, in the germ and first outlines of it) is now fairly afoot, and in slow, but determined, beginning of realization, I will endeavour in this and the next following letter to set its main features completely before you; though, remember, the design would certainly be a shallow and vain one, if its bearings could be either shortly explained, or quickly understood. I have much in my own hope, which I know you are as yet incapable of hoping, but which your enemies are dexterous in discouraging, and eager to discourage. Have you noticed how curiously and earnestly the greater number of public journals that have yet quoted these papers, allege, for their part, nothing but the difficulties in our way; and that with as much contempt as they can venture to express? No editor could say to your face that the endeavour to give you fresh air, wholesome employment, and high education, was reprehensible or dangerous. The worst he can venture to say is, that it is ridiculous,—which

you observe is, by most, declared as wittily as they may.

Some must, indeed, candidly think, as well as say so. Education of any noble kind has of late been so constantly given only to the idle classes, or, at least, to those who conceive it a privilege to be idle,* that it is difficult for any person, trained in modern habits of thought, to imagine a true and refined scholarship, of which the essential foundation is to be skill in some useful labour. Time and trial will show which of the two conceptions of education is indeed the ridiculous one—and *have* shown, many and many a day before this, if any one would look at the showing. Such trial, however, I mean anew to make, with what life is left to me, and help given to me: and the manner of it is to be this, that, few or many, as our company may be, we will secure for the people of Britain as wide spaces of British ground as we can; and on such spaces of freehold land we will cause to be trained as many British children as we can, in healthy, brave, and kindly life, to every one of whom there shall be done true justice, and dealt fair opportunity of "advancement," or what else may, indeed, be good for them.

* Infinite nonsense is talked about the "work done" by the upper classes. I have done a little myself, in my day, of the kind of work they boast of; but mine, at least, has been all play. Even lawyer's, which is, on the whole, the hardest, you may observe to be essentially grim play, made more jovial for themselves by conditions which make it somewhat dismal to other people. Here and there we have a real worker among soldiers, or no soldiering would long be possible; nevertheless young men don't go into the Guards with any primal or essential idea of work.

"True justice!" I might more shortly have written "justice," only you are all now so much in the way of asking for what you think "rights," which, if you could get them, would turn out to be the deadliest wrongs;—and you suffer so much from an external mechanism of justice, which for centuries back has abetted, or, at best, resulted in, every conceivable manner of injustice—that I am compelled to say "*True* justice," to distinguish it from that which is commonly imagined by the populace, or attainable under the existing laws, of civilized nations.

This true justice—(not to spend time, which I am apt to be too fond of doing, in verbal definition), consists mainly in the granting to every human being due aid in the development of such faculties as it possesses for action and enjoyment; primarily, for useful action, because all enjoyment worth having (nay, all enjoyment not harmful) must in some way arise out of that, either in happy energy, or rightly complacent and exulting rest.

"Due" aid, you see, I have written. Not "equal" aid. One of the first statements I made to you respecting this domain of ours was "there shall be no equality in it." In education especially, true justice is curiously unequal—if you choose to give it a hard name, iniquitous. The right law of it is that you are to take most pains with the best material. Many conscientious masters will plead for the exactly contrary iniquity, and say you should take the most pains with the dullest boys. But that

is not so (only you must be very careful that you know which *are* the dull boys; for the cleverest look often very like them). Never waste pains on bad ground; let it remain rough, though properly looked after and cared for; it will be of best service so; but spare no labour on the good, or on what has in it the capacity of good. The tendency of modern help and care is quite morbidly and madly in reverse of this great principle. Benevolent persons are always, by preference, busy on the essentially bad; and exhaust themselves in efforts to get maximum intellect from cretins, and maximum virtue from criminals. Meantime, they take no care to ascertain (and for the most part when ascertained, obstinately refuse to remove) the continuous sources of cretinism and crime, and suffer the most splendid material in child-nature to wander neglected about the streets, until it has become rotten to the degree in which they feel prompted to take an interest in it. Now I have not the slightest intention—understand this, I beg of you, very clearly—of setting myself to mend or reform people; when they are once out of form they may stay so, for me.* But of what unspoiled stuff I

* I speak in the first person, not insolently, but necessarily, being yet alone in this design: and for some time to come the responsibility of carrying it on must rest with me, nor do I ask or desire any present help, except from those who understand what I have written in the course of the last ten years, and who can trust me, therefore. But the continuance of the scheme must depend on the finding men staunch and prudent for the heads of each department of the practical work, consenting, indeed, with each other as to

can find to my hand I will cut the best shapes there is room for; shapes unalterable, if it may be, for ever.

"The best shapes there is room for," since, according to the conditions around them, men's natures must expand or remain contracted; and, yet more distinctly, let me say, "the best shapes that there is *substance* for," seeing that we must accept contentedly infinite difference in the original nature and capacity, even at their purest; which it is the first condition of right education to make manifest to all persons—most of all to the persons chiefly concerned. That other men should know their measure, is, indeed, desirable; but that they should know it themselves, is wholly necessary.

"By competitive examination of course?" Sternly, no! but under absolute prohibition of all violent and strained effort—most of all envious or anxious effort—in every exercise of body and mind; and by enforcing on every scholar's heart, from the first to the last stage of his instruction, the irrevocable ordinance of the third Fors Clavigera, that his mental rank among men is fixed from the hour he was born,—that by no temporary or violent effort can he train, though he may seriously injure the faculties he has; that by no manner of effort can he increase them; and that his best happiness is to consist in the admiration of powers by him for

certain great principles of that work, but left wholly to their own judgment as to the manner and degree in which they are to be carried into effect.

ever unattainable, and of arts, and deeds, by him ever inimitable.

Some ten or twelve years ago, when I was first actively engaged in Art teaching, a young Scottish student came up to London to put himself under me, having taken many prizes (justly, with respect to the qualities looked for by the judges) in various schools of Art. He worked under me very earnestly and patiently for some time; and I was able to praise his doings in what I thought very high terms: nevertheless, there remained always a look of mortification on his face, after he had been praised, however unqualifiedly. At last, he could hold no longer, but one day, when I had been more than usually complimentary, turned to me with an anxious, yet not unconfident expression, and asked: "Do you think, sir, that I shall ever draw as well as Turner?"

I paused for a second or two, being much taken aback; and then answered,* "It is far more likely you should be made Emperor of All the Russias. There is a new Emperor every fifteen or twenty years, on the average; and by strange hap, and fortunate cabal, anybody might be made Emperor. But there is only one Turner in five hundred years, and God decides, without any admission of auxiliary cabal, what piece of clay His soul is to be put in."

It was the first time that I had been brought into direct collision with the modern system of prize-giving and competition; and the mischief of it was,

* I do not mean that I answered in these words, but to the effect of them, at greater length.

in the sequel, clearly shown to me, and tragically. This youth had the finest powers of mechanical execution I have ever met with, but was quite incapable of invention, or strong intellectual effort of any kind. Had he been taught early and thoroughly to know his place, and be content with his faculty, he would have been one of the happiest and most serviceable of men. But, at the Art schools, he got prize after prize for his neat handling; and having, in his restricted imagination, no power of discerning the qualities of great work, all the vanity of his nature was brought out unchecked; so that, being intensely industrious and conscientious, as well as vain, (it is a Scottish combination of character not unfrequent,*) he naturally expected to become one of the greatest of men. My answer not only mortified, but angered him, and made him suspicious of me; he thought I wanted to keep his talents from being fairly displayed, and soon afterwards asked leave (he was then in my employment as well as under my teaching) to put himself under another master. I gave him leave at once, telling him, "if he found the other master no better to his mind, he might come back to me whenever he chose." The other master giving him no more hope of advancement than I did, he came back to me; I sent him

* We English are usually bad altogether in a harmonious way, and only quite insolent when we are quite good-for-nothing; the least good in us shows itself in a measure of modesty; but many Scotch natures, of fine capacity otherwise, are rendered entirely abortive by conceit.

into Switzerland, to draw Swiss architecture; but instead of doing what I bid him, quietly, and nothing else, he set himself, with furious industry, to draw snowy mountains and clouds, that he might show me he *could* draw like Albert Durer, or Turner;—spent his strength in agony of vain effort;—caught cold, fell into decline, and died. How many actual deaths are now annually caused by the strain and anxiety of competitive examination, it would startle us all if we could know: but the mischief done to the best faculties of the brain in all cases, and the miserable confusion and absurdity involved in the system itself, which offers every place, not to the man who is indeed fitted for it, but to the one who, on a given day, chances to have bodily strength enough to stand the cruellest strain, are evils infinite in their consequences, and more lamentable than many deaths.

This, then, shall be the first condition of what education it may become possible for us to give, that the strength of the youths shall never be strained; and that their best powers shall be developed in each, without competition, though they shall have to pass crucial, but not severe, examinations, attesting clearly to themselves and to other people, not the utmost they can do, but that at least they can do *some* things accurately and well: their own certainty of this being accompanied with the quite as clear and much happier certainty, that there are many other things which they will never be able to do at all.

"The happier certainty?" Yes. A man's happiness consists infinitely more in admiration of the faculties of others than in confidence in his own. That reverent admiration is the perfect human gift in him; all lower animals are happy and noble in the degree they can share it. A dog reverences you, a fly does not; the capacity of partly understanding a creature above him, is the dog's nobility. Increase such reverence in human beings, and you increase daily their happiness, peace, and dignity; take it away, and you make them wretched as well as vile. But for fifty years back modern education has devoted itself simply to the teaching of impudence; and then we complain that we can no more manage our mobs! "Look at Mr. Robert Stephenson," (we tell a boy,) "and at Mr. James Watt, and Mr. William Shakspeare! You know you are every bit as good as they; you have only to work in the same way, and you will infallibly arrive at the same eminence." Most boys believe the "you are every bit as good as they," without any painful experiment: but the better-minded ones really take the advised measures; and as, at the end of all things, there *can* be but one Mr. James Watt or Mr. William Shakspeare, the rest of the candidates for distinction, finding themselves, after all their work, still indistinct, think it must be the fault of the police, and are riotous accordingly.

To some extent it *is* the fault of the police, truly enough, considering as the police of Europe, or teachers of politeness and civic manners, its higher

classes,—higher either by race or faculty. Police they are, or else are nothing: bound to keep order, both by clear teaching of the duty and delight of Respect, and, much more, by being themselves—Respectable; whether as priests, or kings, or lords, or generals, or admirals;—if they will only take care to be verily *that*, the Respect will be forthcoming, with little pains: nay, even Obedience, inconceivable to modern free souls as it may be, we shall get again, as soon as there is anybody worth obeying, and who can keep us out of shoal water.

Not but that those two admirals and their captains have been sorely, though needfully, dealt with. It was, doubtless, not a scene of the brightest in our naval history—that *Agincourt*, entomologically, as it were, pinned to her wrong place, off Gibraltar; but in truth, it was less the captain's fault, than the ironmonger's. You need not think you can ever have seamen in iron ships; it is not in flesh and blood to be vigilant when vigilance is so slightly necessary: the best seaman born will lose his qualities, when he knows he can steam against wind and tide,* and has to handle ships so large that the care of them is necessarily divided among many persons. If you want sea-captains indeed, like Sir Richard Grenville or Lord Dundonald, you must give them small ships,

* "Steam has, of course, utterly extirpated seamanship," says Admiral Rous, in his letter to the *Times* (which I had, of course, not seen when I wrote this). Read the whole letter and the article on it in the *Times* of the 17th, which is entirely temperate and conclusive.

and wooden ones,—nothing but oak, pine, and hemp to trust to, above or below,—and those, trustworthy.

You little know how much is implied in the two conditions of boys' education that I gave you in my last letter,—that they shall all learn either to ride or sail; nor by what constancy of law the power of highest discipline and honour is vested by Nature in the two chivalries—of the Horse and the Wave. Both are significative of the right command of man over his own passions; but they teach, farther, the strange mystery of relation that exists between his soul and the wild natural elements on the one hand, and the wild lower animals on the other. The sea-riding gave their chief strength of temper to the Athenian, Norman, Pisan, and Venetian,—masters of the arts of the world: but the gentleness of chivalry, properly so called, depends on the recognition of the order and awe of lower and loftier animal-life, first clearly taught in the myth of Chiron, and in his bringing up of Jason, Æsculapius, and Achilles, but most perfectly by Homer in the fable of the horses of Achilles, and the part assigned to them, in relation to the death of his friend, and in prophecy of his own. There is, perhaps, in all the 'Iliad' nothing more deep in significance—there is nothing in all literature more perfect in human tenderness, and honour for the mystery of inferior life,* than the verses that describe the sorrow of

* The myth of Balaam; the cause assigned for the journey of the first King of Israel from his father's house; and the manner of

the divine horses at the death of Patroclus, and the comfort given them by the greatest of the gods. You shall read Pope's translation; it does not give you the manner of the original, but it entirely gives you the passion:—

"Meantime, at distance from the scene of blood,
The pensive steeds of great Achilles stood;
Their godlike master slain before their eyes
They wept, and shared in human miseries.
In vain Automedon now shakes the rein,
Now plies the lash, and soothes and threats in vain;
Nor to the fight nor Hellespont they go,
Restive they stood, and obstinate in woe;
Still as a tombstone, never to be moved,
On some good man or woman unreproved
Lays its eternal weight; or fix'd as stands
A marble courser by the sculptor's hands,
Placed on the hero's grave. Along their face,
The big round drops coursed down with silent pace,
Conglobing on the dust. Their manes, that late
Circled their arched necks, and waved in state,
Trail'd on the dust, beneath the yoke were spread,
And prone to earth was hung their languid head:
Nor Jove disdain'd to cast a pitying look,
While thus relenting to the steeds he spoke:
'Unhappy coursers of immortal strain!
Exempt from age, and deathless now in vain!
Did we your race on mortal man bestow,
Only, alas! to share in mortal woe?
For ah! what is there, of inferior birth,
That breathes or creeps upon the dust of earth;
What wretched creature of what wretched kind,
Than man more weak, calamitous and blind?

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the triumphal entry of the greatest King of Judah into His capital, are symbolic of the same truths; but in a yet more strange humility.

A miserable race! But cease to mourn!
For not by you shall Priam's son be borne
High on the splendid car; one glorious prize
He rashly boasts; the rest our will denies.
Ourself will swiftness to your nerves impart,
Ourself with rising spirits swell your heart.
Automedon your rapid flight shall bear
Safe to the navy through the storm of war. . . .'
He said; and, breathing in th' immortal horse
Excessive spirit, urged them to the course;
From their high manes they shake the dust, and bear
The kindling chariot through the parted war."

Is not that a prettier notion of horses than you will get from your betting English chivalry on the Derby day?* We will have, please heaven, some riding, not as jockeys ride, and some sailing, not as pots and kettles sail, once more on English land and sea; and out of both, kindled yet again, the chivalry of heart of the Knight of Athens, and Eques of Rome, and Ritter of Germany, and Chevalier of France, and Cavalier of England—chivalry gentle always and lowly, among those who deserved their name of knight; showing mercy to whom mercy was due, and honour to whom honour.

It exists yet, and out of La Mancha, too (or none of *us* could exist), whatever you may think in these days of ungentleness and Dishonour. It exists secretly, to the full, among you yourselves, and the recovery of it again would be to you as the opening

* Compare also Black Auster at the Battle of the Lake, in Macaulay's 'Lays of Rome.'

of a well in the desert. You remember what I told you were the three spiritual treasures of your life —Admiration, Hope, and Love. Admiration is the Faculty of giving Honour. It is the best word we have for the various feelings of wonder, reverence, awe, and humility, which are needful for all lovely work, and which constitute the habitual temper of all noble and clear-sighted persons, as opposed to the "impudence" of base and blind ones. The Latins called this great virtue "pudor," of which our "impudence" is the negative; the Greeks had a better word, "αἰδώς;" too wide in the bearings of it for me to explain to you to-day, even if it *could* be explained before you recovered the feeling;—which, after being taught for fifty years that impudence is the chief duty of man, and that living in coal-holes and ash-heaps is his proudest existence, and that the methods of generation of vermin are his loftiest subject of science,—it will not be easy for *you* to do; but your children may, and you will see that it is good for them. In the history of the five cities I named, they shall learn, so far as they can understand, what has been beautifully and bravely done; and they shall know the lives of the heroes and heroines in truth and naturalness; and shall be taught to remember the greatest of them on the days of their birth and death; so that the year shall have its full calendar of reverent Memory. And on every day, part of their morning service shall be a song in honour of the hero whose birthday it is: and part of their evening service, a

song of triumph for the fair death of one whose death-day it is: and in their first learning of notes they shall be taught the great purpose of music, which is to say a thing that you mean deeply, in the strongest and clearest possible way; and they shall never be taught to sing what they don't mean. They shall be able to sing merrily when they are happy, and earnestly when they are sad; but they shall find no mirth in mockery, nor in obscenity; neither shall they waste and profane their hearts with artificial and lascivious sorrow.

Regulations which will bring about some curious changes in piano-playing, and several other things.

"Which *will* bring." They are bold words, considering how many schemes have failed disastrously, (as your able editors gladly point out,) which seemed much more plausible than this. But, as far as I know history, good designs have not failed except when they were too narrow in their final aim, and too obstinately and eagerly pushed in the beginning of them. Prosperous Fortune only grants an almost invisible slowness of success, and demands invincible patience in pursuing it. Many good men have failed in haste; more in egotism, and desire to keep everything in their own hands; and some by mistaking the signs of their times; but others, and those generally the boldest in imagination, have not failed; and their successors, true knights or monks, have bettered the fate and raised the thoughts of men for centuries; nay, for decades of centuries. And there is assuredly nothing in this purpose I

lay before you, so far as it reaches hitherto, which will require either knightly courage or monkish enthusiasm to carry out. To divert a little of the large current of English charity and justice from watching disease to guarding health, and from the punishment of crime to the reward of virtue; to establish, here and there, exercise grounds instead of hospitals, and training schools instead of penitentiaries, is not, if you will slowly take it to heart, a frantic imagination. What farther hope I have of getting some honest men to serve, each in his safe and useful trade, faithfully, as a good soldier serves in his dangerous, and too often very wide of useful one, may seem, for the moment, vain enough; for indeed, in the last sermon I heard out of an English pulpit, the clergyman said it was now acknowledged to be impossible for any honest man to live by trade in England. From which the conclusion he drew was, not that the manner of trade in England should be amended, but that his hearers should be thankful they were going to heaven. It never seemed to occur to him that perhaps it might be only through amendment of their ways in trade that some of them could ever get there.

Such madness, therefore, as may be implied in this ultimate hope of seeing some honest work and traffic done in faithful fellowship, I confess to you: but what, for my own part, I am about to endeavour, is certainly within my power, if my life and health last a few years more, and the compass of it is soon definable. First,—as I told you at the beginning

of these Letters,—I must do my own proper work as well as I can—nothing else must come in the way of that; and for some time to come, it will be heavy, because, after carefully considering the operation of the Kensington system of Art-teaching throughout the country, and watching for two years its effect on various classes of students at Oxford, I became finally convinced that it fell short of its objects in more than one vital particular: and I have, therefore, obtained permission to found a separate Mastership of Drawing in connection with the Art Professorship at Oxford; and elementary schools will be opened in the University galleries, next October, in which the methods of teaching will be calculated to meet requirements which have not been contemplated in the Kensington system. But how far what these, not new, but very ancient, disciplines teach, may be by modern students, either required or endured, remains to be seen. The organization of the system of teaching, and preparation of examples, in this school, is, however, at present my chief work,—no light one,—and everything else must be subordinate to it.

But in my first series of lectures at Oxford, I stated (and cannot too often or too firmly state) that no great arts were practicable by any people, unless they were living contented lives, in pure air, out of the way of unsightly objects, and emancipated from unnecessary mechanical occupation. It is simply one part of the practical work I have to do in Art-teaching, to bring, somewhere, such

conditions into existence, and to show the working of them. I know also assuredly that the conditions necessary for the Arts of men, are the best for their souls and bodies; and knowing this, I do not doubt but that it may be with due pains, to some material extent, convincingly shown; and I am now ready to receive help, little or much, from any one who cares to forward the showing of it.

Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, and the Right Hon. William Cowper-Temple, have consented to be the Trustees of the fund; it being distinctly understood that in that office they accept no responsibility for the conduct of the scheme, and refrain from expressing any opinion of its principles. They simply undertake the charge of the money and land given to the St. George's Fund; certify to the public that it is spent or treated, for the purposes of that fund, in the manner stated in my accounts of it; and, in the event of my death, hold it for such fulfilment of its purposes as they may then find possible.

But it is evidently necessary for the right working of the scheme that the Trustees should not, except only in that office, be at present concerned with or involved in it; and that no ambiguous responsibility should fall on them. I know too much of the manner of law to hope that I can get the arrangement put into proper form before the end of the year; but, I hope, at latest, on the eve of Christmas Day (the day I named first) to publish the December number of Fors with the legal terms all clear: until then, whatever sums or land I may receive will be

simply paid to the Trustees, or secured in their name, for the St. George's Fund; what I may attempt afterwards will be, in any case, scarcely noticeable for some time; for I shall only work with the interest of the fund;* and as I have strength and leisure:—I have little enough of the one; and am like to have little of the other, for years to come, if these drawing-schools become useful, as I hope. But what I may do myself is of small consequence. Long before it can come to any convincing result, I believe some of the gentlemen of England will have taken up the matter, and seen that, for their own sake, no less than the country's, they *must* now live on their estates, not in shooting-time only, but all the year; and be themselves farmers, or "shepherd lords," and make the field gain on the street, not the street on the field; and bid the light break into the smoke-clouds, and bear in their hands, up to those loathsome city walls, the gifts of Giotto's Charity, corn and flowers.

It is time, too, I think. Did you notice the lovely instances of chivalry, modesty, and musical taste recorded in those letters in the *Times*, giving description of the "civilizing" influence of our progressive age on the rural district of Margate?

* Since last Fors was published I have sold some more property, which has brought me in another ten thousand to tithe; so that I have bought a second thousand Consols in the names of the Trustees—and have received a pretty little gift of seven acres of woodland, in Worcestershire, for you, already—so you see there is at least a beginning.

They are of some documentary value, and worth preserving, for several reasons. Here they are :—

## I.—A TRIP TO MARGATE

*To the Editor of the Times*

Sir,—On Monday last I had the misfortune of taking a trip per steamer to Margate. The sea was rough, the ship crowded, and therefore most of the Cockney excursionists prostrate with sea-sickness. On landing on Margate pier I must confess I thought that, instead of landing in an English seaport, I had been transported by magic to a land inhabited by savages and lunatics. The scene that ensued when the unhappy passengers had to pass between the double line of a Margate mob on the pier must be seen to be believed possible in a civilized country. Shouts, yells, howls of delight greeted every pale-looking passenger, as he or she got on the pier, accompanied by a running comment of the lowest, foulest language imaginable. But the most insulted victims were a young lady, who, having had a fit of hysterics on board, had to be assisted up the steps, and a venerable-looking old gentleman with a long grey beard, who, by-the-by, was not sick at all, but being crippled and very old, feebly tottered up the slippery steps leaning on two sticks. "Here's a guy!" "Hallo! you old thief, you won't get drowned, because you know that you are to be hung," etc., and worse than that, were the greetings of that poor old man. All this while a very much silver-bestriped policeman stood calmly by, without interfering by word or deed; and myself, having several ladies to take care of, could do nothing except telling the ruffianly mob some hard words, with, of course, no other effect than to draw all the abuse on myself. This is not an exceptional exhibition of Margate ruffianism, but, as I have been told, is of daily occurrence, only varying in intensity with the roughness of the sea.

Public exposure is the only likely thing to put a stop to

such ruffianism ; and now it is no longer a wonder to me why so many people are ashamed of confessing that they have been to Margate.

I remain, Sir, yours obediently,

LONDON, *August* 16. C. L. S.

## II.—MARGATE

*To the Editor of the Times*

SIR,—From personal experience obtained from an enforced residence at Margate, I can confirm all that your correspondent "C. L. S." states of the behaviour of the mob on the jetty ; and in addition I will venture to say that in no town in England, or, so far as my experience goes, on the Continent, can such utterly indecent exhibitions be daily witnessed as at Margate during bathing hours. Nothing can be more revolting to persons having the least feelings of modesty than the promiscuous mixing of the bathers ; nude men dancing, swimming, or floating with women not quite nude, certainly, but with scant clothing. The machines for males and females are not kept apart, and the latter do not apparently care to keep within the awnings. The authorities post notices as to "indecent bathing," but that appears to be all they think they ought to do.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

B.

*To the Editor of the Times*

SIR,—The account of the scenes which occur at the landing of passengers at the Margate jetty, given by your correspondent to-day, is by no means overcharged. But that is nothing. The rulers of the place seem bent on doing their utmost to keep respectable people away, or, doubtless, long before this the class of visitors would have greatly improved. The sea-fronts of the town, which in the summer would be otherwise enjoyable, are abandoned to the noisy rule of the lowest kinds of itinerant mountebanks, organ-grinders, and niggers ; and from early morn till long after

nightfall the place is one hopeless, hideous din. There is yet another grievance. The whole of the drainage is discharged upon the rocks to the east of the harbour, considerably above low-water mark; and to the west, where much building is contemplated, drains have already been laid into the sea, and, when these new houses are built and inhabited, bathing at Margate, now its greatest attraction, must cease for ever.

Yours obediently,

MARGATE, *August* 18. PHAROS.

I have printed these letters for several reasons. In the first place, read after them this account of the town of Margate, given in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' in 1797: "Margate, a seaport town of Kent, on the north side of the Isle of Thanet, near the North Foreland. It is noted for shipping vast quantities of corn (most, if not all, the product of that island) for London, and has a salt-water bath at the Post-house, which has performed great cures in nervous and paralytic cases."

Now this Isle of Thanet, please to observe, which is an elevated (200 to 400 feet) mass of chalk, separated from the rest of Kent by little rivers and marshy lands, ought to be respected by you (as Englishmen), because it was the first bit of ground ever possessed in this greater island by your Saxon ancestors, when they came over, some six or seven hundred of them only, in three ships, and contented themselves for a while with no more territory than that white island. Also, the North Foreland, you ought, I think, to know, is taken for the terminal point of the two sides of Britain, east and south,

in the first geographical account of our dwelling-place, definitely given by a learned person. But you ought, beyond all question, to know, that the cures of the nervous and paralytic cases, attributed seventy years ago to the "salt-water bath at the Post-house," were much more probably to be laid to account of the freshest and changefullest sea-air to be breathed in England, bending the rich corn over that white dry ground, and giving to sight, above the northern and eastern sweep of sea, the loveliest skies that can be seen, not in England only, but perhaps in all the world; able, at least, to challenge the fairest in Europe, to the far south of Italy.

So it was said, I doubt not rightly, by the man who of all others knew best; the once in five hundred years given painter, whose chief work, as separate from others, was the painting of skies. He knew the colours of the clouds over the sea, from the Bay of Naples to the Hebrides; and being once asked where, in Europe, were to be seen the loveliest skies, answered instantly, "In the Isle of Thanet." Where, therefore, and in this very town of Margate, he lived, when he chose to be quit of London, and yet not to travel.

And I can myself give this much confirmatory evidence of his saying;—that though I never stay in Thanet, the two loveliest skies I have myself ever seen (and next to Turner, I suppose few men of fifty have kept record of so many), were, one at Boulogne, and the other at Abbeville; that is

to say, in precisely the correspondent French districts of corn-bearing chalk, on the other side of the Channel.

"And what are pretty skies to us?" perhaps you will ask me: "or what have they to do with the behaviour of that crowd on Margate Pier?"

Well, my friends, the final result of the education I want you to give your children will be, in a few words, this. They will know what it is to see the sky. They will know what it it is to breathe it. And they will know, best of all, what it is to behave under it, as in the presence of a Father who is in heaven.

Faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

INJUSTICE

*Drawn thus by* GIOTTO, *in the Chapel of the Arena at* PADUA.

## LETTER X

*THE BARON'S GATE*

DENMARK HILL,
*7th September*, 1871.

MY FRIENDS,—

FOR the last two or three days, the papers have been full of articles on a speech of Lord Derby's, which, it seems, has set the public mind on considering the land question. My own mind having long ago been both set, and entirely made up, on that question, I have read neither the speech nor the articles on it; but my eye being caught this morning, fortunately, by the words "Doomsday Book" in my *Daily Telegraph*, and presently, looking up the column, by "stalwart arms and heroic souls of free resolute Englishmen," I glanced down the space between, and found this, to me, remarkable passage:

"The upshot is, that, looking at the question from a purely mechanical point of view, we should seek the *beau idéal* in a landowner cultivating huge farms for himself, with abundant machinery and a few well-paid labourers to manage the mechanism, or delegating the task to the smallest possible number of tenants with capital. But when we bear in mind the origin of landlordism, of our national needs, and the real interests

of the great body of English tenantry, we see how advisable it is to retain intelligent yeomen as part of our means of cultivating the soil."

This is all, then, is it, that your Liberal paper ventures to say for you? It is *advisable* to retain a *few* intelligent yeomen in the island. I don't mean to find fault with the *Daily Telegraph:* I think it always means well on the whole, and deals fairly; which is more than can be said for its highly toned and delicately perfumed opponent, the *Pall Mall Gazette.* But I think a "Liberal" paper might have said more for the "stalwart arms and heroic souls" than this. I am going myself to say a great deal more for them, though I am not a Liberal—quite the polar contrary of that.

You, perhaps, have been provoked, in the course of these letters, by not being able to make out *what* I was. It is time you should know, and I will tell you plainly. I am, and my father was before me, a violent Tory of the old school;—Walter Scott's school, that is to say, and Homer's,—I name these two out of the numberless great Tory writers, because they were my own two masters. I had Walter Scott's novels, and the Iliad, (Pope's translation,) for my only reading when I was a child, on week-days: on Sundays their effect was tempered by 'Robinson Crusoe' and the 'Pilgrim's Progress'; my mother having it deeply in her heart to make an evangelical clergyman of me. Fortunately, I had an aunt more evangelical than my

mother; and my aunt gave me cold mutton for Sunday's dinner, which—as I much preferred it hot—greatly diminished the influence of the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and the end of the matter was, that I got all the noble imaginative teaching of Defoe and Bunyan, and yet—am not an evangelical clergyman.

I had, however, still better teaching than theirs, and that compulsorily, and every day of the week. (Have patience with me in this egotism; it is necessary for many reasons that you should know what influences have brought me into the temper in which I write to you.)

Walter Scott and Pope's Homer were reading of my own election, but my mother forced me, by steady daily toil, to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart; as well as to read it every syllable through, aloud, hard names and all, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, about once a year; and to that discipline—patient, accurate, and resolute—I owe, not only a knowledge of the book, which I find occasionally serviceable, but much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature. From Walter Scott's novels I might easily, as I grew older, have fallen to other people's novels; and Pope might, perhaps, have led me to take Johnson's English, or Gibbon's, as types of language; but, once knowing the 32nd of Deuteronomy, the 119th Psalm, the 15th of 1st Corinthians, the Sermon on the Mount, and most of the Apocalypse, every syllable by heart, and having always a way of

thinking with myself what words meant, it was not possible for me, even in the foolishest times of youth, to write entirely superficial or formal English, and the affectation of trying to write like Hooker and George Herbert was the most innocent I could have fallen into.

From my own masters, then, Scott and Homer, I learned the Toryism which my best after-thought has only served to confirm.

That is to say a most sincere love of kings, and dislike of everybody who attempted to disobey them. Only, both by Homer and Scott, I was taught strange ideas about kings, which I find, for the present, much obsolete; for, I perceived that both the author of the Iliad and the author of Waverley made their kings, or king-loving persons, do harder work than anybody else. Tydides or Idomeneus always killed twenty Trojans to other people's one, and Redgauntlet speared more salmon than any of the Solway fishermen, and—which was particularly a subject of admiration to me,—I observed that they not only did more, but in proportion to their doings, got less, than other people—nay, that the best of them were even ready to govern for nothing, and let their followers divide any quantity of spoil or profit. Of late it has seemed to me that the idea of a king has become exactly the contrary of this, and that it has been supposed the duty of superior persons generally to do less, and to get more than anybody else; so that it was, perhaps, quite as well that in those early days my contemplation of existent kingship

was a very distant one, and my childish eyes wholly unacquainted with the splendour of courts.

The aunt who gave me cold mutton on Sundays was my father's sister: she lived at Bridge-end, in the town of Perth, and had a garden full of gooseberry-bushes, sloping down to the Tay, with a door opening to the water, which ran past it clear-brown over the pebbles three or four feet deep; an infinite thing for a child to look down into.

My father began business as a wine-merchant, with no capital, and a considerable amount of debts bequeathed him by my grandfather. He accepted the bequest, and paid them all before he began to lay by anything for himself, for which his best friends called him a fool, and I, without expressing any opinion as to his wisdom, which I knew in such matters to be at least equal to mine, have written on the granite slab over his grave that he was "an entirely honest merchant." As days went on he was able to take a house in Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, No. 54 (the windows of it, fortunately for me, commanded a view of a marvellous iron post, out of which the water-carts were filled through beautiful little trap-doors, by pipes like boa-constrictors; and I was never weary of contemplating that mystery, and the delicious dripping consequent); and as years went on, and I came to be four or five years old, he could command a postchaise and pair for two months in the summer, by help of which, with my mother and me, he went the round of his country customers (who liked to see the principal of

the house his own traveller); so that, at a jog-trot pace, and through the panoramic opening of the four windows of a postchaise, made more panoramic still to me because my seat was a little bracket in front, (for we used to hire the chaise regularly for the two months out of Long Acre, and so could have it bracketed and pocketed as we liked), I saw all the highroads, and most of the cross ones, of England and Wales, and great part of lowland Scotland, as far as Perth, where every other year we spent the whole summer; and I used to read the 'Abbot' at Kinross, and the 'Monastery' in Glen Farg, which I confused with "Glendearg," and thought that the White Lady had as certainly lived by the streamlet in that glen of the Ochils, as the Queen of Scots in the island of Loch Leven.

It happened also, which was the real cause of the bias of my after life, that my father had a rare love of pictures. I use the word "rare" advisedly, having never met with another instance of so innate a faculty for the discernment of true art, up to the point possible without actual practice. Accordingly, wherever there was a gallery to be seen, we stopped at the nearest town for the night; and in reverentest manner I thus saw nearly all the noblemen's houses in England; not indeed myself at that age caring for the pictures, but much for castles and ruins, feeling more and more, as I grew older, the healthy delight of uncovetous admiration, and perceiving, as soon as I could perceive any political truth at all, that it was probably much happier to

live in a small house, and have Warwick Castle to be astonished at, than to live in Warwick Castle, and have nothing to be astonished at; but that, at all events, it would not make Brunswick Square in the least more pleasantly habitable, to pull Warwick Castle down. And, at this day, though I have kind invitations enough to visit America, I could not, even for a couple of months, live in a country so miserable as to possess no castles.

Nevertheless, having formed my notion of kinghood chiefly from the FitzJames of the 'Lady of the Lake,' and of noblesse from the Douglas there, and the Douglas in 'Marmion,' a painful wonder soon arose in my child-mind, why the castles should now be always empty. Tantallon was there; but no Archibald of Angus:—Stirling, but no Knight of Snowdoun. The galleries and gardens of England were beautiful to see—but his Lordship and her Ladyship were always in town, said the housekeepers and gardeners. Deep yearning took hold of me for a kind of "Restoration," which I began slowly to feel that Charles the Second had not altogether effected, though I always wore a gilded oak-apple very reverently in my button-hole on the 29th of May. It seemed to me that Charles the Second's Restoration had been, as compared with the Restoration I wanted, much as that gilded oak-apple to a real apple. And as I grew older, the desire for red pippins instead of brown ones, and Living Kings instead of dead ones, appeared to me rational as well as romantic; and gradually it has become the

main purpose of my life to grow pippins, and its chief hope, to see Kings.

Hope, this last, for others much more than for myself. I can always behave as if I had a King, whether I have one or not; but it is otherwise with some unfortunate persons. Nothing has ever impressed me so much with the power of kingship, and the need of it, as the declamation of the French Republicans against the Emperor before his fall.

He did not, indeed, meet my old Tory notion of a King; and in my own business of architecture he was doing, I saw, nothing but mischief; pulling down lovely buildings, and putting up frightful ones carved all over with L. N.'s: but the intense need of France for a governor of some kind was made chiefly evident to me by the way the Republicans confessed themselves paralyzed by him. Nothing could be done in France, it seemed, because of the Emperor: they could not drive an honest trade; they could not keep their houses in order; they could not study the sun and moon; they could not eat a comfortable déjeûner à la fourchette; they could not sail in the Gulf of Lyons, nor climb on the Mont d'Or; they could not, in fine, (so they said,) so much as walk straight, nor speak plain, because of the Emperor. On this side of the water, moreover, the Republicans were all in the same tale. Their opinions, it appeared, were not printed to their minds in the Paris journals, and the world must come to an end therefore. So that, in fact, here was all

the Republican force of France and England, confessing itself paralyzed, not so much by a real King, as by the shadow of one. All the harm the extant and visible King did was, to encourage the dressmakers and stone-masons in Paris,—to pay some idle people very large salaries,—and to make some, perhaps agreeably talkative, people, hold their tongues. That, I repeat, was all the harm he did, or could do; he corrupted nothing but what was voluntarily corruptible,—crushed nothing but what was essentially not solid: and it remained open to these Republican gentlemen to do anything they chose that was useful to France, or honourable to themselves, between earth and heaven, except only—print violent abuse of this shortish man, with a long nose, who stood, as they would have it, between them and heaven. But there they stood, spell-bound; the one thing suggesting itself to their frantic impotence as feasible, being to get this one shortish man assassinated. Their children would not grow, their corn would not ripen, and the stars would not roll, till they had got this one short man blown into shorter pieces.

If the shadow of a King can thus hold (how many?) millions of men, by their own confession, helpless for terror of it, what power must there be in the substance of one?

But this mass of republicans—vociferous, terrified, and mischievous, is the least part, as it is the vilest, of the great European populace who are lost for want of true kings. It is not these who stand idle,

gibbering at a shadow, whom we have to mourn over;—they would have been good for little, even governed;—but those who work and do *not* gibber,—the quiet peasants in the fields of Europe, sad-browed, honest-hearted, full of natural tenderness and courtesy, who have none to help them, and none to teach; who have no kings, except those who rob them while they live, no tutors, except those who teach them—how to die.

I had an impatient remonstrance sent me the other day, by a country clergyman's wife, against that saying in my former letter, "Dying has been more expensive to you than living." Did I know, she asked, what a country clergyman's life was, and that he was the poor man's only friend?

Alas, I know it, and too well. What can be said of more deadly and ghastly blame against the clergy of England, or any other country, than that they are the poor man's only friends?

Have they, then, so betrayed their Master's charge and mind, in their preaching to the rich;—so smoothed their words, and so sold their authority,—that, after twelve hundred years entrusting of the gospel to them, there is no man in England (this is their chief plea for themselves forsooth) who will have mercy on the poor, but they; and so they must leave the word of God, and serve tables?

I would not myself have said so much against English clergymen, whether of country or town. Three—and one dead makes four—of my dear friends (and I have not many dear friends) are

country clergymen; and I know the ways of every sort of them; my architectural tastes necessarily bringing me into near relations with the sort who like pointed arches and painted glass; and my old religious breeding having given me an unconquerable habit of taking up with any travelling tinker of evangelical principles I may come across; and even of reading, not without awe, the prophetic warnings of any persons belonging to that peculiarly well-informed "persuasion," such, for instance, as those of Mr. Zion Ward "concerning the fall of Lucifer, in a letter to a friend, Mr. William Dick, of Glasgow, price twopence,"* in which I read (as aforesaid, with unfeigned feelings of concern,) that "the slain of the Lord shall be MAN-Y; that is, man, in whom death is, with all the works of carnality shall be burnt up!"

But I was not thinking either of English clergy, or of any other group of clergy, specially, when I wrote that sentence; but of the entire Clerkly or Learned Company, from the first priest of Egypt to the last ordained Belgravian curate, and of all the talk they have talked, and all the quarrelling they have caused, and all the gold they have had given them, to this day, when still "they are the poor man's only friends"—and by no means all of them that, heartily! though I see the Bishop of Manchester has, of late, been superintending—I beg his pardon, Bishops don't superintend—looking on,

[* See Letter XI., p. 223.]

or over, I should have said—the recreations of his flock at the seaside; and "the thought struck him" that railroads were an advantage to them in taking them for their holiday out of Manchester. The thought may, perhaps, strike him, next, that a working man ought to be able to find "holy days" *in* his home, as well as out of it.*

A year or two ago, a man who had at the time, and has still, important official authority over much of the business of the country, was speaking anxiously to me of the misery increasing in the suburbs and back streets of London, and debating, with the good help of the Oxford Regius Professor of Medicine—who was second in council—what sanitary or moral remedy could be found. The debate languished, however, because of the strong conviction in the minds of all three of us that the misery was inevitable in the suburbs of so vast a city. At last, either the minister or physician, I forget which, expressed the conviction. "Well," I answered, "then you must not have large cities." "That," answered the minister, "is an unpractical saying—you know we *must* have them, under existing circumstances."

I made no reply, feeling that it was vain to assure any man actively concerned in modern parliamentary business, that no measures were "practical" except those which touched the source of the evil opposed. All systems of government— all efforts of

* See § 159, (written seven years ago,) in 'Munera Pulveris.'

benevolence, are vain to repress the natural consequences of radical error. But any man of influence who had the sense and courage to refuse himself and his family one London season—to stay on his estate, and employ the shopkeepers in his own village, instead of those in Bond Street—would be "practically" dealing with, and conquering, this evil, so far as in him lay; and contributing with his whole might to the thorough and final conquest of it.

Not but that I know how to meet it directly also, if any London landlords choose so to attack it. You are beginning to hear something of what Miss Hill has done in Marylebone, and of the change brought about by her energy and good sense in the centre of one of the worst districts of London. It is difficult enough, I admit, to find a woman of average sense and tenderness enough to be able for such work; but there are, indeed, other such in the world, only three-fourths of them now get lost in pious lecturing, or altar-cloth sewing; and the wisest remaining fourth stay at home as quiet house-wives, not seeing their way to wider action; nevertheless, any London landlord who will content himself with moderate and fixed rent, (I get five per cent. from Miss Hill, which is surely enough!), assuring his tenants of secure possession if that is paid, so that they need not fear having their rent raised, if they improve their houses; and who will secure also a quiet bit of ground for their children to play in, instead of the street,—has established all the necessary conditions of success; and I doubt not

that Miss Hill herself could find co-workers able to extend the system of management she has originated, and shown to be so effective.

But the best that can be done in this way will be useless ultimately, unless the deep source of the misery be cut off. While Miss Hill, with intense effort and noble power, has partially moralized a couple of acres in Marylebone, at least fifty square miles of lovely country have been Demoralized outside London, by the increasing itch of the upper classes to live where they can get some gossip in their idleness, and show each other their dresses.

That life of theirs must come to an end soon, both here and in Paris, but to what end, it is, I trust, in their own power still to decide. If they resolve to maintain to the last the present system of spending the rent taken from the rural districts in the dissipation of the capitals, they will not always find they can secure a quiet time, as the other day in Dublin, by withdrawing the police, nor that park-railings are the only thing which (police being duly withdrawn) will go down. Those favourite castle battlements of mine, their internal "police" withdrawn, will go down also; and I should be sorry to see it;—the lords and ladies, houseless at least in shooting season, perhaps sorrier, though they *did* find the grey turrets dismal in winter time. If they would yet have them for autumn, they must have them for winter. Consider, fair lords and ladies, by the time you marry, and choose your dwelling-places, there are for you but forty or fifty

winters more in whose dark days you may see the snow fall and wreathe. There will be no snow in Heaven, I presume—still less elsewhere, (if lords and ladies ever miss of Heaven).

And that some may, is perhaps conceivable, for there are more than a few things to be managed on an English estate, and to be "faithful" in those few cannot be interpreted as merely abstracting the rent of them. Nay, even the *Telegraph's* beau idéal of the landowner, from a mechanical point of view, may come short, somewhat. "Cultivating huge farms for himself with abundant machinery ;—" Is that Lord Derby's ideal also, may it be asked? The Scott-reading of my youth haunts me, and I seem still listening to the (perhaps a little too long) speeches of the Black Countess who appears terrifically through the sliding panel in 'Peveril of the Peak,' about "her sainted Derby." Would Saint Derby's ideal, or his Black Countess's, of due ordinance for their castle and estate of Man, have been a minimum of Man therein, and an abundance of machinery? In fact, only the Trinacrian Legs of Man, transposed into many spokes of wheels—no use for "stalwart arms" any more—and less than none for inconveniently "heroic" souls?

"Cultivating huge farms for himself!" I don't even see, after the sincerest efforts to put myself into a mechanical point of view, how it is to be done. For himself? Is he to eat the cornricks then? Surely such a beau idéal is more Utopian than any of mine? Indeed, whether it be praise- or

blame-worthy, it is not so easy to cultivate anything wholly for oneself, nor to consume, oneself, the products of cultivation. I have, indeed, before now, hinted to you that perhaps the "consumer" was not so necessary a person economically, as has been supposed; nevertheless, it is not in his own mere eating and drinking, or even his picture-collecting, that a false lord injures the poor. It is in his bidding and forbidding—or worse still, in ceasing to do either. I have given you another of Giotto's pictures, this month, his imagination of Injustice, which he has seen done in his time, as we in ours; and I am sorry to observe that his Injustice lives in a battlemented castle and in a mountain country, it appears; the gates of it between rocks, and in the midst of a wood; but in Giotto's time, woods were too many, and towns too few. Also, Injustice has indeed very ugly talons to his fingers, like Envy; and an ugly quadruple hook to his lance, and other ominous resemblances to the "hooked bird," the falcon, which both knights and ladies too much delighted in. Nevertheless Giotto's main idea about him is, clearly, that he "sits in the gate" pacifically, with a cloak thrown over his chain-armour (you can just see the links of it appear at his throat), and a plain citizen's cap for a helmet, and his sword sheathed, while all robbery and violence have way in the wild places round him,—he heedless.

Which is, indeed, the depth of Injustice: not the harm you do, but that you permit to be done,—

hooking perhaps here and there something to you with your clawed weapon meanwhile. The baronial type exists still, I fear, in such manner, here and there, in spite of improving centuries.

My friends, we have been thinking, perhaps, to-day, more than we ought of our masters' faults, —scarcely enough of our own. If you would have the upper classes do *their* duty, see that you also do yours. See that you can obey good laws, and good lords, or law-wards, if you once get them— that you believe in goodness enough to know what a good law is. A good law is one that holds, whether you recognize and pronounce it or not; a bad law is one that cannot hold, however much you ordain and pronounce it. That is the mighty truth which Carlyle has been telling you for a quarter of a century—once for all he told it you, and the landowners, and all whom it concerns, in the third book of 'Past and Present' (1845, buy Chapman and Hall's second edition if you can, it is good print, and read it till you know it by heart), and from that day to this, whatever there is in England of dullest and insolentest may be always known by the natural instinct it has to howl against Carlyle. Of late, matters coming more and more to crisis, the liberty men seeing their way, as they think, more and more broad and bright before them, and still this too legible and steady old sign-post saying, That it is *not* the way, lovely as it looks, the outcry against it becomes deafening. Now, I tell you once for all, Carlyle is the only

living writer who has spoken the absolute and perpetual truth about yourselves, and your business; and exactly in proportion to the inherent weakness of brain in your lying guides, will be their animosity against Carlyle. Your lying guides, observe, I say—not meaning that they lie wilfully—but that their nature is to do nothing else. For in the modern Liberal there is a new and wonderful form of misguidance. Of old, it was bad enough that the blind should lead the blind; still, with dog and stick, or even timid walking with recognized need of dog and stick, if not to be had, such leadership might come to good end enough; but now a worse disorder has come upon you, that the squinting should lead the squinting. Now the nature of bat, or mole, or owl, may be undesirable, at least in the day-time, but worse may be imagined. The modern Liberal politico-economist of the Stuart Mill school is essentially of the type of a flat-fish—one eyeless side of him always in the mud, and one eye, on the side that *has* eyes, down in the corner of his mouth,—not a desirable guide for man or beast.

Read your Carlyle, then, with all your heart, and with the best of brain you can give; and you will learn from him first, the eternity of good law, and the need of obedience to it: then, concerning your own immediate business, you will learn farther this, that the beginning of all good law, and nearly the end of it, is in these two ordinances,—That every man shall do good work for his bread: and secondly, that every man shall have good bread for

his work. But the first of these is the only one you have to think of. If you are resolved that the work shall be good, the bread will be sure; if not,—believe me, there is neither steam plough nor steam mill, go they never so glibly, that will win it from the earth long, either for you, or the Ideal Landed Proprietor.

Faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

JUSTICE

*Drawn thus by* GIOTTO, *in the Chapel of the Arena at* PADUA.

## LETTER XI

### *THE ABBOT'S CHAPEL*

DENMARK HILL,
*15th October*, 1871.

MY FRIENDS,—

A DAY seldom passes, now that people begin to notice these Letters a little, without my receiving a remonstrance on the absurdity of writing "so much above the level" of those whom I address.

I have said, however, that eventually you shall understand, if you care to understand, every word in these pages. Through all this year I have only been putting questions; some of them such as have puzzled the wisest, and which may, for a long time yet, prove too hard for you and me: but, next year, I will go over all the ground again, answering the questions, where I know of any answers; or making them plain for your examination, when I know of none.

But, in the meantime, be it admitted, for argument's sake, that this way of writing, which is easy to me, and which most educated persons can easily understand, *is* very much above your level. I want to know why it is assumed so quietly that your brains must always be at a low level? Is it essential to the doing of the work by which

England exists, that its workmen should not be able to understand scholar's English, (remember, I only assume mine to be so for argument's sake), but only newspaper's English? I chanced, indeed, to take up a number of *Belgravia*, the other day, which contained a violent attack on an old enemy of mine—*Blackwood's Magazine;* and I enjoyed the attack mightily, until *Belgravia* declared, by way of coup-de-grace to *Blackwood*, that something which *Blackwood* had spoken of as settled in one way had been irrevocably settled the other way,—"settled," said triumphant *Belgravia*, "in seventy-two newspapers."

Seventy-two newspapers, then, it seems—or, with a margin, eighty-two,—perhaps, to be perfectly safe, we had better say ninety-two—are enough to settle anything in this England of ours, for the present. But, irrevocably, I doubt. If, perchance, you workmen should reach the level of understanding scholar's English instead of newspaper's English, things might a little unsettle themselves again; and, in the end, might even get into positions uncontemplated by the ninety-two newspapers,—contemplated only by the laws of Heaven, and settled by them, some time since, as positions which, if things ever got out of, they would need to get into again.

And, for my own part, I cannot at all understand why well-educated people should still so habitually speak of you as beneath their level, and needing to be written down to, with condescending simplicity, as flat-foreheaded creatures of another race, unredeemable by any Darwinism.

I was waiting last Saturday afternoon on the platform of the railway station at Furness Abbey; (the station itself is tastefully placed so that you can see it, and nothing else but it, through the east window of the Abbot's Chapel, over the ruined altar;) and a party of the workmen employed on another line, wanted for the swiftly progressive neighbourhood of Dalton, were taking Sabbatical refreshment at the tavern recently established at the south side of the said Abbot's Chapel. Presently, the train whistling for them, they came out in a highly refreshed state, and made for it as fast as they could by the tunnel under the line, taking very long steps to keep their balance in the direction of motion, and securing themselves, laterally, by hustling the wall, or any chance passengers. They were dressed universally in brown rags, which, perhaps, they felt to be the comfortablest kind of dress; they had, most of them, pipes, which I really believe to be more enjoyable than cigars; they got themselves adjusted in their carriages by the aid of snatches of vocal music, and looked at us,—(I had charge of a lady and her two young daughters),—with supreme indifference, as indeed at creatures of another race; pitiable, perhaps, —certainly disagreeable and objectionable—but, on the whole, despicable, and not to be minded. We, on our part, had the insolence to pity them for being dressed in rags, and for being packed so close in the third-class carriages: the two young girls bore being run against patiently; and when a thin boy of fourteen or fifteen, the most drunk of the company,

was sent back staggering to the tavern for a forgotten pickaxe, we would, any of us, I am sure, have gone and fetched it for him, if he had asked us. For we were all in a very virtuous and charitable temper: we had had an excellent dinner at the new inn, and had earned that portion of our daily bread by admiring the Abbey all the morning. So we pitied the poor workmen doubly—first, for being so wicked as to get drunk at four in the afternoon; and, secondly, for being employed in work so disgraceful as throwing up clods of earth into an embankment, instead of spending the day, like us, in admiring the Abbey: and I, who am always making myself a nuisance to people with my political economy, inquired timidly of my friend whether she thought it all quite right. And she said, certainly not; but what could be done? It was of no use trying to make such men admire the Abbey, or to keep them from getting drunk. They wouldn't do the one, and they would do the other—they were quite an unmanageable sort of people, and had been so for generations.

Which, indeed, I knew to be partly the truth, but it only made the thing seem to me more wrong than it did before, since here were not only the actual two or three dozen of unmanageable persons, with much taste for beer, and none for architecture; but these implied the existence of many unmanageable persons before and after them,—nay, a long ancestral and filial unmanageableness. They were a Fallen Race, every way incapable, as I acutely felt, of appreciating

the beauty of 'Modern Painters,' or fathoming the significance of 'Fors Clavigera.'

But what they had done to deserve their fall, or what I had done to deserve the privilege of being the author of those valuable books, remained obscure to me; and indeed, whatever the deservings may have been on either side, in this and other cases of the kind, it is always a marvel to me that the arrangement and its consequences are accepted so patiently. For observe what, in brief terms, the arrangement is. Virtually, the entire business of the world turns on the clear necessity of getting on table, hot or cold, if possible, meat—but, at least, vegetables,—at some hour of the day, for all of us: for you labourers, we will say at noon; for us æsthetical persons, we will say at eight in the evening; for we like to have done our eight hours' work of admiring abbeys before we dine. But, at some time of day, the mutton and turnips, or, since mutton itself is only a transformed state of turnips, we may say, as sufficiently typical of everything, turnips only, must absolutely be got for us both And nearly every problem of State policy and economy, as at present understood, and practised, consists in some device for persuading you labourers to go and dig up dinner for us reflective and æsthetical persons, who like to sit still, and think, or admire. So that when we get to the bottom of the matter, we find the inhabitants of this earth broadly divided into two great masses;—the peasant paymasters—spade in hand, original and imperial

producers of turnips; and, waiting on them all round, a crowd of polite persons, modestly expectant of turnips, for some—too often theoretical—service. There is, first, the clerical person, whom the peasant pays in turnips for giving him moral advice; then the legal person, whom the peasant pays in turnips for telling him, in black letter, that his house is his own; there is, thirdly, the courtly person, whom the peasant pays in turnips for presenting a celestial appearance to him; there is, fourthly, the literary person, whom the peasant pays in turnips for talking daintily to him; and there is, lastly, the military person, whom the peasant pays in turnips for standing, with a cocked hat on, in the middle of the field, and exercising a moral influence upon the neighbours. Nor is the peasant to be pitied if these arrangements are all faithfully carried out. If he really gets moral advice from his moral adviser; if his house is, indeed, maintained to be his own, by his legal adviser; if courtly persons, indeed, present a celestial appearance to him; and literary persons, indeed, talk beautiful words: if, finally, his scarecrow, do, indeed, stand quiet, as with a stick through the middle of it, producing, if not always a wholesome terror, at least, a picturesque effect, and colour-contrast of scarlet with green,—they are all of them worth their daily turnips. But if, perchance, it happen that he get *im*moral advice from his moralist, or if his lawyer advise him that his house is *not* his own; and his bard, story-teller, or other literary charmer, begin to charm

him unwisely, not with beautiful words, but with obscene and ugly words—and he be readier with his response in vegetable produce for these than for any other sort; finally, if his quiet scarecrow become disquiet, and seem likely to bring upon him a whole flight of scarecrows out of his neighbours' fields,—the combined fleets of Russia, Prussia, etc., as my friend and your trustee, Mr. Cowper-Temple, has it, (see above, Letter II., p. 37,) it is time to look into such arrangements under their several heads.

Well looked after, however, all these arrangements have their advantages, and a certain basis of reason and propriety. But there are two other arrangements which have no basis on either, and which are very widely adopted, nevertheless, among mankind, to their great misery.

I must expand a little the type of my primitive peasant before defining these. You observe, I have not named among the polite persons giving theoretical service in exchange for vegetable diet, the large, and lately become exceedingly polite, class of artists. For a true artist is only a beautiful development of tailor or carpenter. As the peasant provides the dinner, so the artist provides the clothes and house: in the tailoring and tapestry-producing function, the best of artists ought to be the peasant's wife herself, when properly emulative of Queens Penelope, Bertha, and Maude; and in the house-producing-and-painting function, though concluding itself in such painted chambers as those of the Vatican, the artist is still typically and

essentially a carpenter or mason; first carving wood and stone, then painting the same for preservation; —if ornamentally, all the better. And, accordingly, you see these letters of mine are addressed to the "workmen and labourers" of England,—that is to say, to the providers of houses and dinners, for themselves, and for all men, in this country, as in all others.

Considering these two sorts of Providers, then, as one great class, surrounded by the suppliant persons for whom, together with themselves, they have to make provision, it is evident that they both have need originally of two things—land, and tools. Clay to be subdued; and plough, or potter's wheel, wherewith to subdue it.

Now, as aforesaid, so long as the polite surrounding personages are content to offer their salutary advice, their legal information, etc., to the peasant, for what these articles are verily worth in vegetable produce, all is perfectly fair; but if any of the polite persons contrive to get hold of the peasant's land, or of his tools, and put him into the "position of William," and make him pay annual interest, first for the wood that he planes, and then for the plane he planes it with!—my friends, polite or otherwise, these two arrangements cannot be considered as settled yet, even by the ninety-two newspapers, with all Belgravia to back them.

Not by the newspapers, nor by Belgravia, nor even by the Cambridge Catechism, or the Cambridge Professor of Political Economy.

Look to the beginning of the second chapter in the last edition of Professor Fawcett's Manual of Political Economy, (Macmillan, 1869, p. 105). The chapter purports to treat of the "Classes among whom wealth is distributed." And thus it begins:—

We have described the requisites of production to be three: land, labour, and capital. Since, therefore, land, labour, and capital are essential to the production of wealth, it is natural to suppose that the wealth which is produced ought to be possessed by those who own the land, labour, and capital which have respectively contributed to its production. The share of wealth which is thus allotted to the possessor of the land is termed rent; the portion allotted to the labourer is termed wages, and the remuneration of the capitalist is termed profit.

You observe that in this very meritoriously clear sentence both the possessor of the land and the possessor of the capital are assumed to be absolutely idle persons. If they contributed any labour to the business, and so confused themselves with the labourer, the problem of triple division would become complicated directly;—in point of fact, they do occasionally employ themselves somewhat, and become deserving, therefore, of a share, not of rent only, nor of profit only, but of wages also. And every now and then, as I noted in my last letter, there is an outburst of admiration in some one of the ninety-two newspapers, at the amount of "work" done by persons of the superior classes; respecting which, however, you remember

that I also advised you that a great deal of it was only a form of competitive play. In the main, therefore, the statement of the Cambridge Professor may be admitted to be correct as to the existing facts; the Holders of land and capital being virtually in a state of Dignified Repose, as the Labourer is in a state of—(at least, I hear it always so announced in the ninety-two newspapers)—Dignified Labour.

But Professor Fawcett's sentence, though, as I have just said, in comparison with most writings on the subject, meritoriously clear, yet is not as clear as it might be,—still less as scientific as it might be. It is, indeed, gracefully ornamental, in the use, in its last clause, of the three words, "share," "portion," and "remuneration," for the same thing; but this is not the clearest imaginable language. The sentence, strictly put, should run thus:—"The portion of wealth which is thus allotted to the possessor of the land is termed rent; the portion allotted to the labourer is termed wages; and the portion allotted to the capitalist is termed profit."

And you may at once see the advantage of reducing the sentence to these more simple terms; for Professor Fawcett's ornamental language has this danger in it, that "Remuneration," being so much grander a word than "Portion," in the very roll of it seems to imply rather a thousand pounds a day than three-and-sixpence. And until there be scientific reason shown for anticipating the

portions to be thus disproportioned, we have no right to suggest their being so, by ornamental variety of language.

Again, Professor Fawcett's sentence is, I said, not entirely scientific. He founds the entire principle of allotment on the phrase "it is natural to suppose." But I never heard of any other science founded on what it was natural to suppose. Do the Cambridge mathematicians, then, in these advanced days, tell their pupils that it is natural to suppose the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones? Nay, in the present case, I regret to say it has sometimes been thought wholly *un*natural to suppose any such thing; and so exceedingly unnatural, that to receive either a "remuneration," or a "portion," or a "share," for the loan of anything, without personally working, was held by Dante and other such simple persons in the middle ages to be one of the worst of the sins that could be committed *against* nature: and the receivers of such interest were put in the same circle of Hell with the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

And it is greatly to be apprehended that if ever our workmen, under the influences of Mr. Scott and Mr. Street, come indeed to admire the Abbot's Chapel at Furness more than the railroad station, they may become possessed of a taste for Gothic opinions as well as Gothic arches, and think it "natural to suppose" that a workman's tools should be his own property.

Which I, myself, having been always given to Gothic opinions, do indeed suppose, very strongly; and intend to try with all my might to bring about that arrangement wherever I have any influence;—the arrangement itself being feasible enough, if we can only begin by not leaving our pickaxes behind us after taking Sabbatical refreshment.

But let me again, and yet again, warn you, that only by beginning so,—that is to say, by doing what is in your own power to achieve of plain right,—can you ever bring about any of your wishes; or, indeed, can you, to any practical purpose, begin to wish. Only by quiet and decent exaltation of your own habits can you qualify yourselves to discern what is just, or to define even what is possible. I hear you are, at last, beginning to draw up your wishes in a definite manner; (I challenged you to do so, in *Time and Tide*, four years ago, in vain,) and you mean to have them at last "represented in Parliament;" but I hear of small question yet among you, whether they be just wishes, and can be represented to the power of everlasting Justice, as things not only natural to be supposed, but necessary to be done. For *she* accepts no representation of things in beautiful language, but takes her own view of them, with her own eyes.

I did, indeed, cut out a slip from the *Birmingham Morning News* last September, (12th,) containing a letter written by a gentleman signing himself "Justice" in person, and professing himself an engineer, who talked very grandly about the

"individual and social laws of our nature:" but *he* had arrived at the inconvenient conclusions that "no individual has a natural right to hold property in land," and that "all land sooner or later must become public property." I call this an inconvenient conclusion, because I really think you would find yourselves greatly inconvenienced if your wives couldn't go into the garden to cut a cabbage, without getting leave from the Lord Mayor and Corporation; and if the same principle is to be carried out as regards tools, I beg to state to Mr. Justice-in-Person, that if anybody and everybody is to use my own particular palette and brushes, I resign my office of Professor of Fine Art. Perhaps, when we become really acquainted with the true Justice in Person, not professing herself an engineer, she may suggest to us, as a Natural Supposition,—"That land should be given to those who can use *it*, and tools to those who can use *them;*" and I have a notion you will find this a very tenable supposition also.

I have given you, this month, the last of the pictures I want you to see from Padua;—Giotto's Image of Justice—which, you observe, differs somewhat from the Image of Justice we used to set up in England, above insurance offices, and the like. Bandaged close about the eyes, our English Justice was wont to be, with a pair of grocers' scales in her hand, wherewith, doubtless, she was accustomed to weigh out accurately their shares to the landlords, and portions to the labourers, and remunerations to

the capitalists. But Giotto's Justice has no bandage about her eyes, (Albert Durer's has them *round* open, and flames flashing from them,) and weighs, not with scales, but with her own hands; and weighs not merely the shares, or remunerations of men, but the worth of them; and finding them worth this or that, gives them what they deserve—death, or honour. Those are her forms of "Remuneration."

Are you sure that you are ready to accept the decrees of this true goddess, and to be chastised or rewarded by her, as is your due, being seen through and through to your hearts' core? Or will you still abide by the level balance of the blind Justice of old time; or rather, by the oblique balance of the squinting Justice of our modern geological Mud-Period?—the mud, at present, becoming also more slippery under the feet—I beg pardon, the belly —of squinting Justice, than was once expected; becoming, indeed, (as it is announced, even by Mr. W. P. Price, M.P., chairman at the last half-yearly meeting of the Midland Railway Company,) quite "delicate ground."

The said chairman, you will find, by referring to the *Pall Mall Gazette* of August 17th, 1871, having received a letter from Mr. Bass on the subject of the length of time that the servants of the company were engaged in labour, and their inadequate remuneration, made the following remarks:—"He (Mr. Bass) is treading on very delicate ground. The remuneration of labour, the

value of which, like the value of gold itself, depends altogether on the one great universal law of supply and demand, is a question on which there is very little room for sentiment. He, as a very successful tradesman, knows very well how much the success of commercial operations depends on the observance of that law; and we, sitting here as your representatives, cannot altogether close our eyes to it."

Now it is quite worth your while to hunt out that number of the *Pall Mall Gazette* in any of your free libraries, because a quaint chance in the placing of the type has produced a lateral comment on these remarks of Mr. W. P. Price, M.P.

Take your carpenter's rule, apply it level under the words, "Great Universal Law of Supply and Demand," and read the line it marks off in the other column of the same page. It marks off this, "In Khorassan one-third of the whole population has perished from starvation, and at Ispahan no less than 27,000 souls."

Of course you will think it no business of yours if people are starved in Persia. But the Great "Universal" Law of Supply and Demand may some day operate in the same manner over here; and even in the Mud-and-Flat-fish period, John Bull may not like to have his belly flattened for him to that extent.

You have heard it said occasionally that I am not a practical person. It may be satisfactory to you to know, on the contrary, that this whole plan

of mine is founded on the very practical notion of making you round persons instead of flat. Round and merry, instead of flat and sulky. And my beau idéal is not taken from "a mechanical point of view," but is one already realized. I saw last summer, in the flesh, as round and merry a person as I ever desire to see. He was tidily dressed—not in brown rags, but in green velveteen; he wore a jaunty hat, with a feather in it, a little on one side; he was not drunk, but the effervescence of his shrewd good-humour filled the room all about him; and he could sing like a robin. You may say "like a nightingale," if you like, but I think robin's singing the best, myself; only I hardly ever hear it now, for the young ladies of England have had nearly all the robins shot, to wear in their hats, and the bird-stuffers are exporting the few remaining to America.

This merry round person was a Tyrolese peasant; and I hold it an entirely practical proceeding, since I find my idea of felicity actually produced in the Tyrol, to set about the production of it, here, on Tyrolese principles; which, you will find, on inquiry, have not hitherto implied the employment of steam, nor submission to the great Universal Law of Supply and Demand, nor even Demand for the local Supply of a "Liberal" government. But they do imply labour of all hands on pure earth and in fresh air. They do imply obedience to government which endeavours to be just, and faith in a religion which endeavours to be moral. And they result in

strength of limbs, clearness of throats, roundness of waists, and pretty jackets, and still prettier corsets to fit them.

I must pass, disjointedly, to matters which, in a written letter, would have been put in a postscript; but I do not care, in a printed one, to leave a useless gap in the type. First, the reference in page 197 to the works of Mr. Zion Ward, is incorrect. The passage I quoted is not in the "Letter to a Friend," price twopence, but in the "Origin of Evil Discovered," price fourpence. (John Bolton, Steel House Lane, Birmingham.) And, by the way, I wish that booksellers would save themselves, and me, some (now steadily enlarging) trouble, by noting that the price of these Letters to friends of mine, as supplied by me, the original inditer, to all and sundry, through my only shopman, Mr. Allen, is sevenpence per epistle, and not fivepence halfpenny;* and that the trade profit on the sale of them is intended to be, and must eventually be, as I intend, a quite honestly confessed profit, charged to the customer, not compressed out of the author; which object may be easily achieved by the retail bookseller, if he will resolvedly charge the symmetrical sum of Tenpence per epistle over his counter, as it is my purpose he should. But to return to Mr. Ward; the correction of my reference was sent me by one of his disciples, in a very

[* Referring to the original issue: see Letter VI.]

earnest and courteous letter, written chiefly to complain that my quotation totally misrepresented Mr. Ward's opinions. I regret that it should have done so, but gave the quotation neither to represent nor misrepresent Mr. Ward's opinions; but to show, which the sentence, though brief, quite sufficiently shows, that he had no right to have any.

I have before noted to you, indeed, that, in a broad sense, *nobody* has a right to have opinions; but only knowledges: and, in a practical and large sense, nobody has a right even to make experiments, but only to act in a way which they certainly know will be productive of good. And this I ask you to observe again, because I begin now to receive some earnest inquiries respecting the plan I have in hand, the inquiries very naturally assuming it to be an "experiment," which may possibly be successful, and much more possibly may fail. But it is not an experiment at all. It will be merely the carrying out of what has been done already in some places, to the best of my narrow power, in other places: and so far as it can be carried, it *must* be productive of some kind of good.

For example; I have round me here at Denmark Hill seven acres of leasehold ground. I pay £50 a year ground-rent, and £250 a year in wages to my gardeners; besides expenses in fuel for hothouses, and the like. And for this sum of three hundred odd pounds a year I have some pease and strawberries in summer; some camellias and azaleas in

winter; and good cream, and a quiet place to walk in, all the year round. Of the strawberries, cream, and pease, I eat more than is good for me; sometimes, of course, obliging my friends with a superfluous pottle or pint. The camellias and azaleas stand in the anteroom of my library; and everybody says, when they come in, "How pretty!" and my young lady friends have leave to gather what they like to put in their hair, when they are going to balls. Meantime, outside of my fenced seven acres —owing to the operation of the great universal law of supply and demand—numbers of people are starving; many more, dying of too much gin; and many of their children dying of too little milk; and, as I told you in my first Letter, for my own part, I won't stand this sort of thing any longer.

Now it is evidently open to me to say to my gardeners, "I want no more azaleas or camellias; and no more strawberries and pease than are good for me. Make these seven acres everywhere as productive of good corn, vegetables, or milk, as you can; I will have no steam used upon them, for nobody on my ground shall be blown to pieces; nor any fuel wasted in making plants blossom in winter, for I believe we shall, without such unseasonable blossoms, enjoy the spring twice as much as now; but, in any part of the ground that is not good for eatable vegetables, you are to sow such wild flowers as it seems to like, and you are to keep all trim and orderly. The produce of the land, after I have had my limited and salutary portion of pease,

shall be your own; but if you sell any of it, part of the price you get for it shall be deducted from your wages."

Now observe, there would be no experiment whatever in any one feature of this proceeding. My gardeners might be stimulated to some extra exertion by it; but in any event I should retain exactly the same command over them that I had before. I might save something out of my £250 of wages, but I should pay no more than I do now, and in return for the gift of the produce I should certainly be able to exact compliance from my people with any such capricious fancies of mine as that they should wear velveteen jackets, or send their children to learn to sing; and, indeed, I could grind them, generally, under the iron heel of Despotism, as the ninety-two newspapers would declare, to an extent unheard of before in this free country. And, assuredly, some children would get milk, strawberries, and wild flowers who do not get them now; and my young lady friends would still, I am firm in my belief, look pretty enough at their balls, even without the camellias or azaleas.

I am not going to do this with my seven acres here; first, because they are only leasehold; secondly, because they are too near London for wild flowers to grow brightly in. But I have bought, instead, twice as many freehold acres, where wild flowers are growing now, and shall continue to grow; and there I mean to live: and, with the tenth part of my available fortune, I will buy other bits of

freehold land, and employ gardeners on them in this above-stated matter. I may as well tell you at once that my tithe will be, roughly, about seven thousand pounds altogether, (a little less rather than more). If I get no help, I can show what I mean, even with this; but if any one cares to help me with gifts of either money or land, they will find that what they give is applied honestly, and does a perfectly definite service: they might, for aught I know, do more good with it in other ways; but *some* good in this way—and that is all I assert—they will do, certainly, and not experimentally And the longer they take to think of the matter the better I shall like it, for my work at Oxford is more than enough for me just now, and I shall not practically bestir myself in this land-scheme for a year to come, at least; nor then, except as a rest from my main business: but the money and land will always be safe in the hands of your trustees for you, and you need not doubt, though I show no petulant haste about the matter, that I remain

Faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

## LETTER XII

### *THE PRINCE'S LESSON*

DENMARK HILL,
*23rd December*, 1871.

MY FRIENDS,—

YOU will scarcely care to read anything I have to say to you this evening—having much to think of, wholly pleasant, as I hope; and prospect of delightful days to come, next week. At least, however, you will be glad to know that I have really made you the Christmas gift I promised—£7,000 Consols, in all, clear; a fair tithe of what I had: and to as much perpetuity as the law will allow me. It will not allow the dead to have their own way, long, whatever licence it grants the living in their humours: and this seems to me unkind to those helpless ones;—very certainly it is inexpedient for the survivors. For the wisest men are wise to the full in death; and if you would give them, instead of stately tombs, only so much honour as to do their will, when they themselves can no more contend for it, you would find it good memorial of them, such as the best of them would desire, and full of blessing to all men for all time.

English law needs mending in many respects; in none more than in this. As it stands, I can only

vest my gift in trustees, desiring them, in the case of my death, immediately to appoint their own successors, and in such continued succession, to apply the proceeds of the St. George's Fund to the purchase of land in England and Scotland, which shall be cultivated to the utmost attainable fruitfulness and beauty by the labour of man and beast thereon, such men and beasts receiving at the same time the best education attainable by the trustees for labouring creatures, according to the terms stated in this book, Fors Clavigera.

These terms, and the arrangement of the whole matter, will become clearer to you as you read on with me, and cannot be clear at all, till you do; —here is the money, at any rate, to help you, one day, to make merry with, only, if you care to give me any thanks, will you pause now for a moment from your merrymaking, to tell me,—to whom, as Fortune has ordered it, no merrymaking is possible at this time, (nor, indeed, much at any time;) —to me, therefore, standing as it were astonished in the midst of this gaiety of yours, will you tell— what it is all about?

Your little children would answer, doubtless, fearlessly, "Because the Child Christ was born today:" but you, wiser than your children, it may be,—at least, it should be,—are you also sure that He was?

And if He was, what is that to you?

I repeat, are you indeed *sure* He was? I mean, with real happening of the strange things you have

been told, that the Heavens opened near Him, showing their hosts, and that one of their stars stood still over His head? You are sure of that, you say? I am glad; and wish it were so with me; but I have been so puzzled lately by many matters that once seemed clear to me, that I seldom now feel sure of anything. Still seldomer, however, do I feel sure of the contrary of anything. That people say they saw it, may not prove that it was visible; but that I never saw it cannot prove that it was invisible: and this is a story which I more envy the people who believe on the weakest grounds, than who deny on the strongest. The people whom I envy not at all are those who imagine they believe it, and do not.

For one of two things this story of the Nativity *is* certainly, and without any manner of doubt. It relates either a fact full of power, or a dream full of meaning. It is, at the least, not a cunningly devised fable, but the record of an impression made, by some strange spiritual cause, on the minds of the human race, at the most critical period of their existence;—an impression which has produced, in past ages, the greatest effect on mankind ever yet achieved by an intellectual conception; and which is yet to guide, by the determination of its truth or falsehood, the absolute destiny of ages to come.

Will you give some little time therefore, to think of it with me to-day, being, as you tell me, sure of its truth? What, then, let me ask you, is its truth to *you?* The Child for whose birth you are rejoicing

was born, you are told, to save His people from their sins; but I have never noticed that you were particularly conscious of any sins to be saved from. If I were to tax you with any one in particular—lying, or thieving, or the like—my belief is you would say directly I had no business to do anything of the kind.

Nay, but, you may perhaps answer me—"That is because we *have* been saved from our sins; and we are making merry, because we are so perfectly good."

Well; there would be some reason in such an answer. There is much goodness in you to be thankful for: far more than you know, or have learned to trust. Still, I don't believe you will tell me seriously that you eat your pudding and go to your pantomimes only to express your satisfaction that you are so very good.

What is, or may be, this Nativity, to you, then, I repeat? Shall we consider, a little, what, at all events, it was to the people of its time; and so make ourselves more clear as to what it might be to us? We will read slowly.

"And there were, in that country, shepherds, staying out in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night."

Watching night and day, that means; not going home. The staying out in the field is the translation of a word from which a Greek nymph has her name Agraulos, "the stayer out in fields," of whom I shall have something to tell you, soon.

"And behold, the Messenger of the Lord stood above them, and the glory of the Lord lightened round them, and they feared a great fear."

"Messenger." You must remember that, when this was written, the word "angel" had only the effect of our word—"messenger"—on men's minds. Our translators say "angel" when they like, and "messenger" when they like; but the Bible, messenger only, or angel only, as you please. For instance, "Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the angels, and sent them forth another way?"

Would not you fain know what this angel looked like? I have always grievously wanted, from childhood upwards, to know that; and gleaned diligently every word written by people who said they had seen angels: but none of them ever tell me what their eyes are like, or hair, or even what dress they have on. We dress them, in pictures, conjecturally, in long robes, falling gracefully; but we only continue to think that kind of dress angelic, because religious young girls, in their modesty, and wish to look only human, give their dresses flounces. When I was a child, I used to be satisfied by hearing that angels had always two wings, and sometimes six; but now nothing dissatisfies me so much as hearing that; for my business compels me continually into close drawing of wings; and now they never give me the notion of anything but a swift or a gannet. And, worse still, when I see a picture of an angel, I know positively where he got

his wings from—not at all from any heavenly vision, but from the worshipped hawk and ibis, down through Assyrian flying bulls, and Greek flying horses, and Byzantine flying evangelists, till we get a brass eagle, (of all creatures in the world, to choose!) to have the gospel of peace read from the back of it.

Therefore, do the best I can, no idea of an angel is possible to me. And when I ask my religious friends, they tell me not to wish to be wise above that which is written. My religious friends, let me write a few words of this letter, not to my poor puzzled workmen, but to you, who will all be going serenely to church to-morrow. This messenger, formed as we know not, stood above the shepherds, and the glory of the Lord lightened round them.

You would have liked to have seen it, you think! Brighter than the sun; perhaps twenty-one coloured, instead of seven-coloured, and as bright as the lime-light: doubtless you would have liked to see it, at midnight, in Judæa.

You tell me not to be wise above that which is written; why, therefore, should you be desirous, above that which is given? You cannot see the glory of God as bright as the lime-light at midnight; but you may see it as bright as the sun, at eight in the morning, if you choose. You might, at least, forty Christmases since: but not now.

You know I must antedate my letters for special days. I am actually writing this sentence on the

second December, at ten in the morning, with the feeblest possible gleam of sun on my paper; and for the last three weeks the days have been one long drift of ragged gloom, with only sometimes five minutes' gleam of the glory of God, between the gusts, which no one regarded.

I am taking the name of God in vain, you think? No, my religious friends, not I. For completed forty years, I have been striving to consider the blue heavens, the work of His fingers, and the moon and the stars which He hath ordained: but you have left me nothing now to consider here at Denmark Hill, but these black heavens, the work of your fingers, and the blotting of moon and stars which you have ordained; you,—taking the name of God in vain every Sunday, and His work and His mercy in vain all the week through.

"You have nothing to do with it—you are very sorry for it—and Baron Liebig says that the power of England is coal?"

You have everything to do with it. Were you not told to come out and be separate from all evil? You take whatever advantage you can of the evil work and gain of this world, and yet expect the people you share with, to be damned, out of your way, in the next. If you would begin by putting them out of your way here, you would perhaps carry some of them with you there. But return to your night vision, and explain to me, if not what the angel was like, at least what you understand him to have said,—he, and those with him. With

his own lips he told the shepherds there was born a Saviour for them; but more was to be told: "And suddenly there was with him a multitude of the heavenly host."

People generally think that this verse means only that after one angel had spoken, there came more to sing, in the manner of a chorus; but it means far another thing than that. If you look back to Genesis you find creation summed thus:—"So the heavens and earth were finished, and all the host of them." Whatever living powers of any order, great or small, were to inhabit either, are included in the word. The host of earth includes the ants and the worms of it; the host of heaven includes,—we know not what;—how should we?—the creatures that are in the stars which we cannot count,—in the space which we cannot imagine; some of them so little and so low that they can become flying poursuivants to this grain of sand we live on; others having missions, doubtless, to larger grains of sand, and wiser creatures on them.

But the vision of their multitude means at least this; that all the powers of the outer world which have any concern with ours became in some way visible now: having interest—they, in the praise,—as all the hosts of earth in the life, of this Child, born in David's town. And their hymn was of peace to the lowest of the two hosts—peace on earth;—and praise in the highest of the two hosts; and, better than peace, and sweeter than praise, Love, among men.

The men in question, ambitious of praising God after the manner of the hosts of heaven, have written something which they suppose this Song of Peace to have been like; and sing it themselves, in state, after successful battles. But you hear it, those of you who go to church in orthodox quarters, every Sunday; and will understand the terms of it better by recollecting that the Lordship, which you begin the Te Deum by ascribing to God, is this, over all creatures, or over the two Hosts. In the Apocalypse it is "Lord, All governing"—Pantocrator—which we weakly translate "Almighty"; but the Americans still understand the original sense, and apply it so to their god, the dollar, praying that the will may be done of their Father which is in Earth. Farther on in the hymn, the word "Sabaoth" again means all "hosts" or creatures; and it is an important word for workmen to recollect, because the saying of St. James is coming true, and that fast, that the cries of the reapers whose wages have been kept back by fraud, have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth; that is to say, Lord of all creatures, as much of the men at St. Catherine's Docks as of Saint Catherine herself, though they live only under Tower-Hill, and she lived close under Sinai.

You see, farther, I have written above, not "good will towards men," but "love among men." It is nearer right so; but the word is not easy to translate at all. What it means precisely, you may conjecture best from its use at Christ's baptism—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am *well-pleased*."

For, in precisely the same words, the angels say, there is to be "well-pleasing in men."

Now, my religious friends, I continually hear you talk of acting for God's glory, and giving God praise. Might you not, for the present, think less of praising, and more of pleasing Him? He can, perhaps, dispense with your praise; your opinions of His character, even when they come to be held by a large body of the religious press, are not of material importance to Him. He has the hosts of heaven to praise Him, who see more of His ways, it is likely, than you; but you hear that you may be pleasing to Him, if you try:—that He expected, then, to have some satisfaction in you; and might have even great satisfaction—well-pleasing, as in His own Son, if you tried. The sparrows and the robins, if you give them leave to nest as they choose about your garden, will have their own opinions about your garden; some of them will think it well laid out,—others ill. You are not solicitous about their opinions; but you like them to love each other; to build their nests without stealing each other's sticks, and to trust you to take care of them.

Perhaps, in like manner, if in this garden of the world you would leave off telling its Master your opinions of Him, and, much more, your quarrelling about your opinions of Him; but would simply trust Him, and mind your own business modestly, He might have more satisfaction in you than He has had yet these eighteen hundred and seventy-one years, or than He seems likely to have in the eighteen

hundred and seventy-second. For first, instead of behaving like sparrows and robins, you want to behave like those birds you read the Gospel from the backs of,—eagles. Now the Lord of the garden made the claws of eagles for them, and your fingers for you; and if you would do the work of fingers, with the fingers He made, would, without doubt, have satisfaction in you. But, instead of fingers, you want to have claws—not mere short claws, at the finger-ends, as Giotto's Injustice has them; but long claws that will reach leagues away; so you set to work to make yourselves manifold claws,—far-scratching;—and this smoke, which hides the sun and chokes the sky—this Egyptian darkness that may be felt—manufactured by you, singular modern children of Israel, that you may have *no* light in your dwellings, is none the fairer, because cast forth by the furnaces, in which you forge your weapons of war.

A very singular children of Israel! Your Father, Abraham, indeed, once saw the smoke of a country go up as the smoke of a furnace; but not with envy of the country.

Your English power is coal? Well; also the power of the Vale of Siddim was in slime,—petroleum of the best; yet the Kings of the five cities fell there; and the end was no well-pleasing of God among men.

Emmanuel! God with us!—how often, you tenderly-minded Christians, have you desired to see this great sight,—this Babe lying in a manger? Yet, you have so contrived it, once more, this year,

for many a farm in France, that if He were born again, in that neighbourhood, there would be found no manger for Him to lie in; only ashes of mangers. Our clergy and lawyers dispute, indeed, whether He may not be yet among us; if not in mangers, in the straw of them, or the corn. An English lawyer spoke twenty-six hours but the other day —the other four days, I mean—before the Lords of her Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council, to prove that an English clergyman had used a proper quantity of equivocation in his statement that Christ was in Bread. Yet there is no harm in anybody thinking that He is in Bread,—or even in Flour! The harm is, in their expectation of His Presence in gunpowder.

Present, however, you believe He was, that night, in flesh, to any one who might be warned to go and see Him. The inn was quite full; but we do not hear that any traveller chanced to look into the cow-house; and most likely, even if they had, none of them would have been much interested in the workman's young wife, lying there. They probably would have thought of the Madonna, with Mr. John Stuart Mill, ('Principles of Political Economy,' 8vo, Parker, 1848, vol. ii., page 321,) that there was scarcely "any means open to her of gaining a livelihood, except as a wife and mother;" and that "women who prefer that occupation might justifiably adopt it—but, that there should be no option, no other carrière possible, for the great majority of women, except in the humbler departments

of life, is one of those social injustices which call loudest for remedy."

The poor girl of Nazareth had less option than most; and with her weak "be it unto me as Thou wilt," fell so far below the modern type of independent womanhood, that one cannot wonder at any degree of contempt felt for her by British Protestants. Some few people, nevertheless, were meant, at the time, to think otherwise of her. And now, my working friends, I would ask you to read with me, carefully, for however often you may have read this before, I know there are points in the story which you have not thought of.

The shepherds were told that their Saviour was that day born to them "in David's village." We are apt to think that this was told, as of special interest to them, because David was a King.

Not so. It was told them because David was in youth *not* a King; but a Shepherd like themselves. "To you, shepherds, is born this day a Saviour in the shepherd's town;" that would be the deep sound of the message in their ears. For the great interest to them in the story of David himself must have been always, not that he had saved the monarchy, or subdued Syria, or written Psalms, but that he had kept sheep in those very fields they were watching in; and that his grandmother* Ruth had gone gleaning, hard by.

And they said hastily, "Let us go and see."

* Great;—father's father's mother.

Will you note carefully that they only think of *seeing*, not of worshipping? Even when they do see the Child, it is not said that they worshipped. They were simple people, and had not much faculty of worship; even though the heavens had opened for them, and the hosts of heaven had sung. They had been at first only frightened; then curious, and communicative to the bystanders: they do not think even of making any offering, which would have been a natural thought enough, as it was to the first of shepherds: but they brought no firstlings of their flock—(it is only in pictures, and those chiefly painted for the sake of the picturesque, that the shepherds are seen bringing lambs, and baskets of eggs). It is not said here that they brought anything, but they looked, and talked, and went away praising God, as simple people,—yet taking nothing to heart; only the mother did that.

They went away:—"returned," it is said,—to their business, and never seem to have left it again. Which is strange, if you think of it. It is a good business truly, and one much to be commended, not only in itself, but as having great chances of "advancement"—as in the case of Jethro the Midianite's Jew shepherd and the herdsman of Tekoa; besides that keeper of the few sheep in the wilderness, when his brethren were under arms afield. But why are they not seeking for some advancement now, after opening of the heavens to them? or, at least, why not called to it afterwards, being, one would have thought, as fit for ministry

under a shepherd king, as fishermen, or custom-takers?

Can it be that the work is itself the best that can be done by simple men; that the shepherd Lord Clifford, or Michael of the Green-head ghyll, are ministering better in the wilderness than any lords or commoners are likely to do in Parliament, or other apostleship; so that even the professed Fishers of Men are wise in calling themselves Pastors rather than Piscators? Yet it seems not less strange that one never hears of any of these shepherds any more. The boy who made the pictures in this book for you could only fancy the Nativity, yet left his sheep, that he might preach of it, in his way, all his life. But they, who saw it, went back to their sheep.

Some days later, another kind of persons came. On that first day, the simplest people of His own land;—twelve days after, the wisest people of other lands, far away: persons who had received, what you are all so exceedingly desirous to receive, a good education; the result of which, to you,—according to Mr. John Stuart Mill, in the page of the chapter on the probable future of the labouring classes, opposite to that from which I have just quoted his opinions about the Madonna's line of life—will be as follows:—"From this increase of intelligence, several effects may be confidently anticipated. First: that they will become even less willing than at present to be led, and governed, and directed into the way they should go, by the

mere authority and prestige of superiors. If they have not now, still less will they have hereafter, any deferential awe, or religious principle of obedience, holding them in mental subjection to a class above them."

It is curious that, in this old story of the Nativity, the greater wisdom of these educated persons appears to have produced upon them an effect exactly contrary to that which you hear Mr. Stuart Mill would have "confidently anticipated." The uneducated people came only to see, but these highly trained ones to worship; and they have allowed themselves to be led, and governed, and directed into the way which they should go, (and that a long one,) by the mere authority and prestige of a superior person, whom they clearly recognize as a born king, though not of their people. "Tell us, where is he that is born King of the Jews, for we have come to worship him."

You may perhaps, however, think that these Magi had received a different kind of education from that which Mr. Mill would recommend, or even the book which I observe is the favourite of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—'Cassell's Educator.' It is possible; for they were looked on in their own country as themselves the best sort of Educators which the Cassell of their day could provide, even for Kings. And as you are so much interested in education, you will, perhaps, have patience with me while I translate for you a wise Greek's account of the education of the princes of

Persia; account given three hundred years, and more, before these Magi came to Bethlehem.

"When the boy is seven years old he has to go and learn all about horses, and is taught by the masters of horsemanship, and begins to go against wild beasts; and when he is fourteen years old, they give him the masters whom they call the Kingly Child-Guiders: and these are four, chosen the best out of all the Persians who are then in the prime of life—to wit, the most wise man they can find, and the most just, and the most temperate, and the most brave; of whom the first, the wisest, teaches the prince the magic of Zoroaster; and that magic is the service of the Gods: also, he teaches him the duties that belong to a king. Then the second, the justest, teaches him to speak truth all his life through. Then the third, the most temperate, teaches him not to be conquered by even so much as a single one of the pleasures, that he may be exercised in freedom, and verily a king, master of all things within himself, not slave to them. And the fourth, the bravest, teaches him to be dreadless of all things, as knowing that whenever he fears, he is a slave."

Three hundred and some odd years before that carpenter, with his tired wife, asked for room in the inn, and found none, these words had been written, my enlightened friends; and much longer than that, these things had been done. And the three hundred and odd years (more than from Elizabeth's time till now) passed by, and much fine philosophy was

talked in the interval, and many fine things found out: but it seems that when God wanted tutors for His little Prince,—at least, persons who would have been tutors to any other little prince, but could only worship this one,—He could find nothing better than those quaint-minded masters of the old Persian school. And since then, six times over, three hundred years have gone by, and we have had a good deal of theology talked in them;—not a little popular preaching administered; sundry Academies of studious persons assembled,—Paduan, Parisian, Oxonian, and the like; persons of erroneous views carefully collected and burnt; Eton, and other grammars, diligently digested; and the most exquisite and indubitable physical science obtained,—able, there is now no doubt, to extinguish gases of every sort, and explain the reasons of their smell. And here we are, at last, finding it still necessary to treat ourselves by Cassell's Educator,—patent filter of human faculty. Pass yourselves through that, my intelligent working friends, and see how clear you will come out on the other side.

Have a moment's patience yet with me, first, while I note for you one or two of the ways of that older tutorship. Four masters, you see, there were for the Persian Prince. One had no other business than to teach him to speak truth; so difficult a matter the Persians thought it. *We* know better,—we. You heard how perfectly the French gazettes did it last year, without any tutor, by their Holy Republican instincts. Then the second tutor had

to teach the Prince to be free. That tutor both the French and you have had for some time back; but the Persian and Parisian dialects are not similar in their use of the word "freedom"; of that hereafter. Then another master has to teach the Prince to fear nothing; him, I admit, you want little teaching from, for your modern Republicans fear even the devil little, and God, less; but may I observe that you are occasionally still afraid of thieves, though as I said some time since, I never can make out what you have got to be stolen.

For instance, much as we suppose ourselves desirous of beholding this Bethlehem Nativity, or getting any idea of it, I know an English gentleman who was offered the other day a picture of it, by a good master,—Raphael,—for five-and-twenty pounds; and said it was too dear: yet had paid, only a day or two before, five hundred pounds for a pocket-pistol that shot people out of both ends, so afraid of thieves was he.*

None of these three masters, however, the masters of justice, temperance, or fortitude, were sent to the little Prince at Bethlehem. Young as He was, He had already been in some practice of these; but there was yet the fourth cardinal virtue, of which, so far as we can understand, He had to learn a new manner for His new reign: and the masters of that

* The papers had it that several gentlemen concurred in this piece of business; but they put the Nativity at five-and-twenty thousand, and the Agincourt, or whatever the explosive protector was called, at five hundred thousand.

were sent to Him—the masters of Obedience. For He had to become obedient unto Death.

And the most wise—says the Greek—the most wise master of all, teaches the boy magic; and this magic is the service of the gods.

My skilled working friends, I have heard much of your magic lately. Sleight of hand, and better than that, (you say,) sleight of machine. Léger-de-main, improved into léger-de-mécanique. From the West, as from the East, now, your American and Arabian magicians attend you; vociferously crying their new lamps for the old stable lantern of scapegoat's horn. And for the oil of the trees of Gethsemane, your American friends have struck oil more finely inflammable. Let Aaron look to it, how he lets any run down his beard; and the wise virgins trim their wicks cautiously, and Madelaine la Pétroleuse, with her improved spikenard, take good heed how she breaks her alabaster, and completes the worship of her Christ.

Christmas, the mass of the Lord's anointed;—you will hear of devices enough to make it merry to you this year, I doubt not. The increase in the quantity of disposable malt liquor and tobacco is one great fact, better than all devices. Mr. Lowe has, indeed, says the *Times* of June 5th, "done the country good service, by placing before it, in a compendious form, the statistics of its own prosperity. . . . The twenty-two millions of people of 1825 drank barely nine millions of barrels of beer in the twelve months: our thirty-two millions now living

drink all but twenty-six millions of barrels. The consumption of spirits has increased also, though in nothing like the same proportion; but whereas sixteen million pounds of tobacco sufficed for us in 1825, as many as forty-one million pounds are wanted now. By every kind of measure, therefore, and on every principle of calculation, the growth of our prosperity is established." *

Beer, spirits, and tobacco, are thus more than ever at your command; and magic besides, of lantern, and harlequin's wand; nay, necromancy if you will, the Witch of Endor at number so and so round the corner, and raising of the dead, if you roll away the tables from off them. But of this one sort of magic, this magic of Zoroaster, which is the service of God, you are not likely to hear. In one sense, indeed, you have heard enough of becoming God's servants; to wit, servants dressed in His court livery, to stand behind His chariot, with gold-headed sticks. Plenty of people will advise you to apply to Him for that sort of position: and many will urge you to assist Him in carrying out His intentions, and be what the Americans call helps, instead of servants.

Well! that may be, some day, truly enough; but

* This last clause does not, you are however to observe, refer in the great Temporal Mind, merely to the merciful Dispensation of beer and tobacco, but to the general state of things, afterwards thus summed with exultation: "We doubt if there is a household in the kingdom which would now be contented with the conditions of living cheerfully accepted in 1825."

before you can be allowed to help Him, you must be quite sure that you can *see* Him. It is a question now, whether you can even see any creature of His—or the least thing that He has made,—see it,—so as to ascribe due worth, or worship to it,—how much less to its Maker?

You have felt, doubtless, at least those of you who have been brought up in any habit of reverence, that every time when in this letter I have used an American expression, or aught like one, there came upon you a sense of sudden wrong—the darting through you of acute cold. I meant you to feel that: for it is the essential function of America to make us all feel that. It is the new skill they have found there;—this skill of degradation; others they have, which other nations had before them, from whom they have learned all they know, and among whom they must travel, still, to see any human work worth seeing. But this is their speciality, this their one gift to their race,—to show men how *not* to worship,—how never to be ashamed in the presence of anything. But the magic of Zoroaster is the exact reverse of this, to find out the worth of all things and do them reverence.

Therefore, the Magi bring treasures, as being discerners of treasures, knowing what is intrinsically worthy, and worthless; what is best in brightness, best in sweetness, best in bitterness—gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. Finders of treasure hid in fields, and goodliness in strange pearls, such as produce no effect whatever on the public mind,

bent passionately on its own fashion of pearl-diving at Gennesaret.

And you will find that the essence of the misteaching, of your day, concerning wealth of any kind, is in this denial of intrinsic value. What anything is worth, or not worth, it cannot tell you: all that it can tell is the exchange value. What Judas, in the present state of Demand and Supply, can get for the article he has to sell, in a given market, that is the value of his article: -Yet you do not find that Judas had joy of his bargain. No Christmas, still less Easter, holidays, coming to him with merrymaking. Whereas, the Zoroastrians, who "take stars for money," rejoice with exceeding great joy at seeing something, which—they cannot put in their pockets. For, "the vital principle of their religion is the recognition of one supreme power; the God of Light—in every sense of the word—the Spirit who creates the world, and rules it, and defends it against the power of evil." *

I repeat to you, now, the question I put at the beginning of my letter. What is this Christmas to you? What Light is there, for your eyes, also, pausing yet over the place where the Child lay?

I will tell you, briefly, what Light there should be;—what lessons and promise are in this story, at the least. There may be infinitely more than I know; but there is certainly, this.

* MAX MÜLLER: 'Genesis and the Zend-Avesta.'

The Child is born to bring you the promise of new life. Eternal or not, is no matter; pure and redeemed, at least.

He is born twice on your earth; first, from the womb, to the life of toil; then, from the grave, to that of rest.

To His first life He is born in a cattle-shed, the supposed son of a carpenter; and afterwards brought up to a carpenter's craft.

But the circumstances of His second life are, in great part, hidden from us: only note this much of it. The three principal appearances to His disciples are accompanied by giving or receiving of food. He is known at Emmaus in breaking of bread; at Jerusalem He Himself eats fish and honey to show that He is not a spirit; and His charge to Peter is "when they had dined," the food having been obtained under His direction.

But in His first showing Himself to the person who loved Him best, and to whom He had forgiven most, there is a circumstance more singular and significant still. Observe—assuming the accepted belief to be true,—this was the first time when the Maker of men showed Himself to human eyes, risen from the dead, to assure them of immortality. You might have thought He would have shown Himself in some brightly glorified form,—in some sacred and before unimaginable beauty.

He shows Himself in so simple aspect, and dress, that she, who, of all people on the earth, should have known Him best, glancing quickly back through

her tears, does not know Him. Takes Him for "the gardener."

Now, unless absolute orders had been given to us, such as would have rendered error impossible, (which would have altered the entire temper of Christian probation); could we possibly have had more distinct indication of the purpose of the Master—born first by witness of shepherds, in a cattle-shed, then by witness of the person for whom He had done most, and who loved Him best, in the garden, and in gardener's guise, and not known even by His familiar friends till He gave them bread—could it be told us, I repeat, more definitely by any sign or indication whatsoever, that the noblest human life was appointed to be by the cattle-fold and in the garden; and to be known as noble in breaking of bread?

Now, but a few words more. You will constantly hear foolish and ignoble persons conceitedly proclaiming the text, that "not many wise and not many noble are called."

Nevertheless, of those who are truly wise, and truly noble, all are called that exist. And to sight of this Nativity, you find that, together with the simple persons, near at hand, there were called precisely the wisest men that could be found on earth at that moment.

And these men, for their own part, came—I beg you very earnestly again to note this—not to see, nor talk—but to do reverence. They are neither curious nor talkative, but submissive.

And, so far as they came to teach, they came as teachers of one virtue only: Obedience. For of this Child, at once Prince and Servant, Shepherd and Lamb, it was written: "See, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. He shall not strive, nor cry, till he shall bring forth Judgment unto Victory."

My friends, of the black country, you may have wondered at my telling you so often,—I tell you nevertheless, once more, in bidding you farewell this year,—that one main purpose of the education I want you to seek is, that you may see the sky, with the stars of it again; and be enabled, in their material light—"riveder le stelle."

But, much more, out of this blackness of the smoke of the Pit, the blindness of heart, in which the children of *Dis*obedience blaspheme God and each other, heaven grant to you the vision of that sacred light, at pause over the place where the young Child was laid; and ordain that more and more in each coming Christmas it may be said of you, "When they saw the Star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."

Believe me your faithful servant,

JOHN RUSKIN.

## LETTER XIII

### *EVERY MAN HIS DUE*

MY FRIENDS,— *1st January*, 1872.

I WOULD wish you a happy New Year, if I thought my wishes likely to be of the least use. Perhaps, indeed, if your cap of liberty were what you always take it for, a wishing cap, I might borrow it of you, for once; and be so much cheered by the chime of its bells, as to wish you a happy New Year, whether you deserved one or not: which would be the worst thing I could possibly bring to pass for you. But wishing cap, belled or silent, you can lend me none; and my wishes having proved, for the most part, vain for myself, except in making me wretched till I got rid of them, I will not present you with anything which I have found to be of so little worth. But if you trust more to any one else's than mine, let me advise your requesting them to wish that you may deserve a happy New Year, whether you get one or not.

To some extent, indeed, that way, you are sure to get it: and it will much help you towards the seeing such way if you would make it a practice in your talk always to say you "deserve" things, instead of that you "have a right" to them. Say

that you "deserve" a vote,—"deserve" so much a day, instead of that you have "a right to" a vote, etc. The expression is both more accurate and more general; for if it chanced, which Heaven forbid,—but it might be,—that you deserved a whipping, you would never think of expressing that fact by saying you "had a right to" a whipping; and if you deserve anything better than that, why conceal your deserving under the neutral term, "rights"; as if you never meant to claim more than might be claimed also by entirely nugatory and worthless persons? Besides, such accurate use of language will lead you sometimes into reflection on the fact, that what you deserve, it is not only well for you to get, but certain that you ultimately *will* get; and neither less nor more.

Ever since Carlyle wrote that sentence about rights and mights, in his "French Revolution," all blockheads of a benevolent class have been declaiming against him, as a worshipper of force. What else, in the name of the three Magi, *is* to be worshipped? Force of brains, Force of heart, Force of hand;—will you dethrone these, and worship apoplexy?—despise the spirit of Heaven, and worship phthisis? Every condition of idolatry is summed in the one broad wickedness of refusing to worship Force, and resolving to worship No-Force; —denying the Almighty, and bowing down to four-and-twopence with a stamp on it.

But Carlyle never meant in that place to refer you to such final truth. He meant but to tell you that

before you dispute about what you should get, you would do well to find out first what is to be gotten. Which briefly is, for everybody, at last, their deserts, and no more.

I did not choose, in beginning this book a year since, to tell you what I meant it to become. This, for one of several things, I mean,—that it shall put before you so much of the past history of the world, in an intelligible manner, as may enable you to see the laws of Fortune or Destiny, "Clavigera," Nail bearing; or, in the full idea, nail-and-hammer bearing; driving the iron home with hammer-stroke, so that nothing shall be moved; and fastening each of us at last to the Cross we have chosen to carry. Nor do I doubt being able to show you that this irresistible power is also just; appointing measured return for every act and thought, such as men deserve.

And that being so, foolish moral writers will tell you that whenever you do wrong you will be punished, and whenever you do right rewarded: which is true, but only half the truth. And foolish immoral writers will tell you that if you do right, you will get no good; and if you do wrong dexterously, no harm. Which, in their sense of good and harm, is true also, but, even in that sense, only half the truth. The joined and four-square truth is, that every right is exactly rewarded, and every wrong exactly punished; but that, in the midst of this subtle, and, to our impatience, slow, retribution, there is a startlingly separate or counter ordinance of good and evil,—one to this man, and the other to

that,—one at this hour of our lives, and the other at that,—ordinance which is entirely beyond our control; and of which the providential law, hitherto, defies investigation.

To take an example near at hand, which I can answer for. Throughout the year which ended this morning, I have been endeavouring, more than hitherto in any equal period, to act for others more than for myself: and looking back on the twelve months, am satisfied that in some measure I have done right. So far as I am sure of that, I see also, even already, definitely proportioned fruit, and clear results following from that course;—consequences simply in accordance with the unfailing and undeceivable Law of Nature.

That it has chanced to me, in the course of the same year, to have to sustain the most acute mental pain yet inflicted on my life; to pass through the most nearly mortal illness;—and to write your Christmas letter beside my mother's dead body, are appointments merely of the hidden Fors, or Destiny, whose power I mean to trace for you in past history, being hitherto, in the reasons of it, indecipherable, yet palpably following certain laws of storm, which are in the last degree wonderful and majestic.

Setting this Destiny, over which you have no control whatsoever, for the time, out of your thoughts, there remains the symmetrical destiny, over which you have control absolute—namely, that you are ultimately to get—exactly what you are worth.

And your control over this destiny consists,

therefore, simply in *being* worth more or less, and not at all in voting that you are worth more or less. Nay, though you should leave voting, and come to fighting, which I see is next proposed, you will not, even that way, arrive any nearer to your object—admitting that you *have* an object, which is much to be doubted. I hear, indeed, that you mean to fight for a Republic, in consequence of having been informed by Mr. John Stuart Mill, and others, that a number of utilities are embodied in that object. We will inquire into the nature of this object presently, going over the ground of my last January's letter again; but first, may I suggest to you that it would be more prudent, instead of fighting to make us all republicans against our will, —to make the most of the republicans you have got? There are many, you tell me, in England,—more in France, a sprinkling in Italy,—and nobody else in the United States. What should you fight for, being already in such prevalence? Fighting is unpleasant, now-a-days, however glorious, what with mitrailleuses, torpedoes, and mismanaged commissariat. And what, I repeat, should you fight for? All the fighting in the world cannot make us Tories change our old opinions, any more than it will make you change your new ones. It cannot make us leave off calling each other names if we like—Lord this, and the Duke of that, whether you republicans like it or not. After a great deal of trouble on both sides, it might, indeed, end in abolishing our property; but without any trouble

on either side, why cannot your friends begin by abolishing their own? Or even abolishing a tithe of their own? Ask them to do merely as much as I, an objectionable old Tory, have done for you. Make them send you in an account of their little properties, and strike you off a tenth, for what purposes you see good; and for the remaining nine-tenths, you will find clue to what should be done in the *Republican* of last November, wherein Mr. W. Riddle, C.E., "fearlessly states" that all property must be taken under control; which is, indeed, precisely what Mr. Carlyle has been telling you these last thirty years, only he seems to have been under an impression, which I certainly shared with him, that you republicans objected to control of any description. Whereas if you let anybody put your property under control, you will find practically he has a good deal of hold upon *you*, also.

You are not all agreed upon that point perhaps? But you are all agreed that you want a Republic. Though England is a rich country, having worked herself literally black in the face to become so, she finds she cannot afford to keep a Queen any longer; —is doubtful even whether she would not get on better Queenless; and I see with consternation that even one of my own personal friends, Mr. Auberon Herbert, rising the other day at Nottingham, in the midst of great cheering, declares that, though he is not in favour of any immediate change, yet, "if we asked ourselves what form of government was the most reasonable, the most in harmony with

ideas of self-government and self-responsibility, and what Government was most likely to save us from unnecessary divisions of party, and to weld us into one compact mass, he had no hesitation in saying the weight of argument was in favour of a Republic." *

Well, suppose we *were* all welded into a compact mass. Might it not still be questionable what sort of a mass we were? After any quantity of puddling, iron is still nothing better than iron;—in any rarity of dispersion, gold-dust is still gold. Mr. Auberon Herbert thinks it desirable that you should be stuck together. Be it so; but what is there to stick? At this time of year, doubtless, some of your children, interested generally in production of puddings, delight themselves, to your great annoyance, with idealization of pudding in the gutter; and enclose, between unctuous tops and bottoms, imaginary mince. But none of them, I suppose, deliberately come in to their mothers, at cooking-time, with materials for a treat on Republican principles. Mud for suet—gravel for plums—droppings of what heaven may send, for flavour;—"Please, mother, a towel, to knot it tight"—(or, to use Mr. Herbert's expression, "weld it into a compact mass")—"Now for the old saucepan, mother;—and you just lay the cloth!"

My friends, I quoted to you last year the foolishest thing, yet said, according to extant history, by

* See *Pall Mall Gazette*, Dec. 5th, 1871.

lips of mankind—namely, that the cause of starvation is quantity of meat.* But one can yet see what the course of foolish thought was which achieved that saying: whereas, though it is not absurd to quite the same extent to believe that a nation depends for happiness and virtue on the form of its government, it is more difficult to understand how so large a number of otherwise rational persons have been beguiled into thinking so. The stuff of which the nation is made is developed by the effort and the fate of ages: according to that material, such and such government becomes possible to it, or impossible. What other form of government you try upon it than the one it is fit for, necessarily comes to nothing; and a nation wholly worthless is capable of none.

Notice, therefore, carefully Mr. Herbert's expression "welded into a compact mass." The phrase would be likely enough to occur to any one's mind, in a midland district; and meant, perhaps, no more than if the speaker had said "melted," or "blended" into a mass. But whether Mr. Herbert meant more or not, his words meant more. You may melt glass or glue into a mass, but you can only weld, or wield, metal. And are you sure that, if you would have a Republic, you are capable of being welded into one? Granted that you are no better than iron, are you as good? Have you the toughness

* Letter IV. p. 77. Compare Letter V. p. 85; and observe, in future references of this kind I shall merely say, IV. 77; V. 85, etc.

in you? and can you bear the hammering? Or, would your fusion together—your literal con-fusion,—be as of glass only, blown thin with nitrogen, and shattered before it got cold?

Welded Republics there indeed have been, ere now, but they ask first for bronze, then for a hammerer, and mainly, for patience on the anvil. Have you any of the three at command,—patience, above all things, the most needed, yet not one of your prominent virtues? And finally, for the cost of such smith's work,—My good friends, let me recommend you, in that point of view, to keep your Queen.

Therefore, for your first bit of history this year, I will give you one pertinent to the matter, which will show you how a monarchy, and such a Republic as you are now capable of producing, have verily acted on special occasion, so that you may compare their function accurately.

The special occasion that I choose shall be the most solemn of all conceivable acts of Government; the adjudging and execution of the punishment of Death. The two examples of it shall be, one under an absolutely despotic Monarchy, acting through ministers trained in principles of absolute despotism; and the other in a completely free Republic, acting by its collective wisdom, and in association of its practical energies.

The example of despotism shall be taken from the book which Mr. Froude most justly calls "the prose epic of the English nation," the records

compiled by Richard Hakluyt, Preacher, and sometime Student of Christchurch in Oxford, imprinted at London by Ralph Newberie, anno 1599, and then in five volumes, quarto, in 1811, two hundred and seventy copies only of this last edition being printed.

These volumes contain the original—usually personal,—narratives of the earliest voyages of the great seamen of all countries,—the chief part of them English; who "first went out across the unknown seas, fighting, discovering, colonizing; and graved out the channels, paving them at last with their bones, through which the commerce and enterprise of England has flowed out over all the world." * I mean to give you many pieces to read out of this book, which Mr. Froude tells you truly is your English Homer; this piece, to our present purpose, is already quoted by him in his essay on England's forgotten worthies; among whom, far-forgotten though they be, most of you must have heard named Sir Francis Drake. And of him, it now imports you to know this much: that he was the son of a clergyman, who fled into Devonshire to escape the persecution of Henry VIII. (abetted by our old friend, Sir Thomas of Utopia)—that the little Frank was apprenticed by his father to the master of a small vessel trading to the Low Countries; and that as apprentice, he behaved so well that his master, dying, left him his vessel, and he begins his independent life with that capital. Tiring

* J. A. Froude, 'Short Studies on Great Subjects.' Longmans, 1867; Page 297.

of affairs with the Low Countries, he sells his little ship, and invests his substance in the new trade to the West Indies. In the course of his business there, the Spaniards attack him, and carry off his goods. Whereupon, Master Francis Drake, making his way back to England, and getting his brother John to join with him, after due deliberation, fits out two ships, to wit, the *Passover* of 70 tons, and the *Swan* of 24, with 73 men and boys (both crews, all told,) and a year's provision; and, thus appointed, Master Frank in command of the *Passover*, and Master John in command of the *Swan*, weigh anchor from Plymouth on the 24th of May, 1572, to make reprisals on the most powerful nation of the then world. And making his way in this manner over the Atlantic, and walking with his men across the Isthmus of Panama, he beholds "from the top of a very high hill, the great South Sea, on which no English ship had ever sailed. Whereupon, he lifted up his hands to God, and implored His blessing on the resolution which he then formed, of sailing in an English ship on that sea." In the meantime, building some light fighting pinnaces, of which he had brought out the material in the *Passover*, and boarding what Spanish ships he can, transferring his men to such as he finds most convenient to fight in, he keeps the entire coast of Spanish America in hot water for several months; and having taken and rifled, between Carthagena and Nombre de Dios (Name of God) more than two hundred ships of all sizes, sets sail cheerfully for

England, arriving at Plymouth on the 9th of August, 1573, on Sunday, in the afternoon; and so much were the people delighted with the news of their arrival, that they left the preacher, and ran in crowds to the quay, with shouts and congratulations.

He passes four years in England, explaining American affairs to Queen Elizabeth and various persons at court; and at last in mid-life, in the year 1577, he obtains a commission from the Queen, by which he is constituted Captain-general of a fleet of five ships: the *Pelican*, admiral, 100 tons, his own ship; the *Elizabeth*, vice-admiral, 80 tons; the *Swan*, 50 tons; *Marigold*, 30; and *Christopher* (Christ-bearer) 15; the collective burden of the entire fleet being thus 275 tons; its united crews 164 men, all told: and it carries whatever Sir Francis thought "might contribute to raise in those nations, with whom he should have any intercourse, the highest ideas of the politeness and magnificence of his native country. He, therefore, not only procured a complete service of silver for his own table, and furnished the cook-room with many vessels of the same metal, but engaged several musicians to accompany him."

I quote from Johnson's life of him,—you do not know if in jest or earnest? Always in earnest, believe me, good friends. If there be jest in the nature of things, or of men, it is no fault of mine. I try to set them before you as they truly are. And Sir Francis and his crew, musicians and all, were in uttermost earnest, as in the quiet course of their narrative you will find. For arriving on the 20th of

June, 1578, "in a very good harborough, called by Magellan Port St. Julian, where we found a gibbet standing upon the maine, which we supposed to be the place where Magellan did execution upon his disobedient and rebellious company; . . . . in this port our Generall began to inquire diligently of the actions of M. Thomas Doughtie, and found them not to be such as he looked for, but tending rather to contention or mutinie, or some other disorder, whereby (without redresse) the successe of the voyage might greatly have bene hazarded; whereupon the company was called together and made acquainted with the particulars of the cause, which were found, partly by Master Doughtie's owne confession, and partly by the evidence of the fact, to be true; which when our Generall saw, although his private affection to M. Doughtie (as hee then in the presence of us all sacredly protested) was great, yet the care he had of the state of the voyage, of the expectation of her Maiestie, and of the honour of his country, did more touch him (as, indeede, it ought) than the private respect of one man: so that, the cause being thoroughly heard, and all things done in good order, as neere as might be to the course of our lawes in England, it was concluded that M. Doughtie should receive punishment according to the qualitie of the offence: and he, seeing no remedie but patience for himselfe, desired before his death to receive the Communion, which he did at the hands of M. Fletcher, our Minister, and our Generall himselfe accompanied him in that holy action: which

being done, and the place of execution made ready, hee having embraced our Generall, and taken his leave of all the companie, with prayer for the Queen's Maiestie and our realme, in quiet sort laid his head to the blocke, where he ended his life. This being done, our Generall made divers speaches to the whole company, persuading us to unitie, obedience, love, and regard of our voyage; and for the better confirmation thereof, willed evry man the next Sunday following to prepare himselfe to receive the Communion, as Christian brethren and friends ought to doe, which was done in very reverent sort, and so with good contentment every man went about his businesse."

Thus pass judgment and execution, under a despotic Government and despotic Admiral, by religious, or, it may be, superstitious laws.

You shall next see how judgment and execution pass on the purest republican principles; every man's opinion being held as good as his neighbour's; and no superstitious belief whatsoever interfering with the wisdom of popular decision, or the liberty of popular action. The republicanism shall also be that of this enlightened nineteenth century: in other respects the circumstances are similar; for the event takes place during an expedition of British—not subjects, indeed, but quite unsubjected persons,—acknowledging neither Queen nor Admiral,—in search, nevertheless, of gold and silver, in America, like Sir Francis himself. And to make all more precisely illustrative, I am able to

take the account of the matter from the very paper which contained Mr. Auberon Herbert's speech, the *Pall Mall Gazette* of 5th December last. In another column, a little before the addresses of the members for Nottingham, you will therein find, quoted from the *New York Tribune*, the following account of some executions which took place at "the Angels" (Los Angeles), California, on the 24th October.

"The victims were some unoffending Chinamen, the executioners were some 'warm-hearted and impulsive' Irishmen, assisted by some Mexicans. It seems that owing to an impression that the houses inhabited by the Chinamen were filled with gold, a mob collected in front of a store belonging to one of them named Yo Hing with the object of plundering it. The Chinamen barricaded the building, shots were fired, and an American was killed. Then commenced the work of pillage and murder. The mob forced an entrance, four Chinamen were shot dead, seven or eight were wounded, and seventeen were taken and hanged. The following description of the hanging of the first victim will show how the executions were conducted:—

"Weng Chin, a merchant, was the first victim of hanging. He was led through the streets by two lusty Irishmen, who were cheered on by a crowd of men and boys, most of Irish and Mexican birth. Several times the unfortunate Chinaman faltered or attempted to extricate himself from the two brutes who were leading

him, when a half-drunken Mexican in his immediate rear would plunge the point of a large dirk knife into his back. This, of course, accelerated his speed, but never a syllable fell from his mouth. Arriving at the eastern gate of Tomlinson's old lumber yard, just out of Temple Street, hasty preparations for launching the inoffensive man into eternity were followed by his being pulled up to the beam with a rope round his neck. He didn't seem to 'hang right,' and one of the Irishmen got upon his shoulders and jumped upon them, breaking his collar-bone. What with shots, stabs, and strangulation, and other modes of civilized torture, the victim was 'hitched up' for dead, and the crowd gave vent to their savage delight in demoniac yells and a jargon which too plainly denoted their Hibernian nationality.

"One victim, a Chinese physician of some celebrity, Dr. Gnee Sing, offered his tormentors 4,000 dollars in gold to let him go. His pockets were immediately cut and ransacked, a pistol-shot mutilated one side of his face 'dreadfully,' and he too was 'stretched up' with cheers. Another wretched man was jerked up with great force against the beam, and the operation repeated until his head was broken in a way we cannot describe. Three Chinese, one a youth of about fifteen years old, picked up at random, and innocent of even a knowledge of the disturbance, were hanged in the same brutal manner. Hardly a word escaped them, but the younger one said, as the rope was being placed round his neck, 'Me no 'fraid to die; me velly good China boy; me no hurt no man.' Three Chinese boys who were hanged 'on the side

of a waggon' struggled hard for their lives. One managed to lay hold of the rope, upon which two Irishmen beat his hands with clubs and pistols till he released his hold and fell into a 'hanging position.' The Irishmen then blazed away at him with bullets, and so put an end to his existence."

My republican friends,—or otherwise than friends, as you choose to have it—you will say, I presume, that this comparison of methods of magistracy is partial and unfair? It is so. All comparisons—as all experiments—are unfair till you have made more. More you shall make with me; and as many as you like, on your own side. I will tell you, in due time, some tales of Tory gentlemen who lived, and would scarcely let anybody else live, at Padua and Milan, which will do your hearts good. Meantime, meditate a little over these two instances of capital justice, as done severally by monarchists and republicans in the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries; and meditate, not a little, on the capital justice which you have lately accomplished yourselves in France. You have had it all your own way there, since Sedan. No Emperor to paralyze your hands any more, or impede the flow of your conversation. Anything, since that fortunate hour, to be done,—anything to be said, that you liked; and in the midst of you, found by sudden good fortune, two quiet, honest, and brave men; one old and one young, ready to serve you with all their strength, and evidently of supreme

gifts in the way of service,—Generals Trochu and Rossel. You have exiled one, shot the other,* and, but that, as I told you, my wishes are of no account that I know of, I should wish you joy of your "situation."

Believe me, faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

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* "You did not shoot him"? No; my expression was hasty; you only stood by, in a social manner, to see him shot;—how many of you?—and so finely organized as you say you are!

## LETTER XIV

### *ON THE DORDOGNE*

DENMARK HILL,
*1st February*, 1872.

MY FRIENDS,—

IN going steadily over our ground again, roughly broken last year, you see that, after endeavouring, as I did last month, to make you see somewhat more clearly the absurdity of fighting for a Holy Republic before you are sure of having got so much as a single saint to make it of, I have now to illustrate farther the admission made in my first Letter, that even the most courteous and perfect Monarchy cannot make an unsaintly life into a saintly one, nor constitute thieving, for instance, an absolutely praiseworthy profession, however glorious or delightful. It is indeed more difficult to show this in the course of past history than any other moral truth whatsoever. For, without doubt or exception, thieving has not only hitherto been the most respected of professions, but the most healthy, cheerful, and in the practical outcome of it, though not in theory, even the honestest, followed by men. Putting the higher traditional and romantic ideals, such as that of our Robin Hood, and the Scottish Red Robin, for the time, aside, and keeping

to meagre historical facts, could any of you help giving your heartiest sympathy to Master Francis Drake, setting out in his little *Paschal Lamb* to seek his fortune on the Spanish seas, and coming home, on that happy Sunday morning, to the unspeakable delight of the Cornish congregation? Would you like to efface the stories of Edward III., and his lion's whelp, from English history; and do you wish that instead of pillaging the northern half of France, as you read of them in the passages quoted in my fourth Letter, and fighting the Battle of Creçy to get home again, they had stayed at home all the time; and practised, shall we say, upon the flute, as I find my moral friends think Frederick of Prussia should have done? Or would you have chosen that your Prince Harry should never have played that set with his French tennis-balls, which won him Harfleur, and Rouen, and Orleans, and other such counters, which we might have kept, to this day perhaps, in our pockets, but for the wood maid of Domrémy? Are you ready, even now, in the height of your morality, to give back India to the Brahmins and their cows, and Australia to her aborigines and their apes? You are ready? Well, my Christian friends, it does one's heart good to hear it, providing only you are quite sure you know what you are about. "Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour." You are verily willing to accept that alternative? I inquire anxiously, because I see that your Under Secretary of State for India, Mr. Grant Duff, proposes to you,

in his speech at Elgin, not at all as the first object of your lives to be honest; but, as the first, to be rich, and the second to be intelligent. Now when you have all become rich and intelligent, how do you mean to live? Mr. Grant Duff, of course, means by being rich that you are each to have two powdered footmen; but then who are to be the footmen, now that we mustn't have blacks? And granting you all the intelligence in the world on the most important subjects,—the spots in the sun, or the nodes of the moon, as aforesaid,—will that help you to get your dinner, unless you steal it in the old fashion? The subject is indeed discussed with closer definition than by Mr. Grant Duff, by Mr. William Riddle, C.E., the authority I quoted to you for taking property "under control." You had better perhaps be put in complete possession of his views, as stated by himself in the *Republican*, of December last; the rather, as that periodical has not had, according to Mr. Riddle, hitherto a world-wide circulation:—

"THE SIMPLE AND ONLY REMEDY FOR THE WANTS OF NATIONS.

"It is with great grief that I hear that your periodical finds but a limited sale. I ask you to insert a few words from me, which may strike some of your readers as being important. These are *all in all*. What all nations want, Sir, are, 1, Shelter; 2, Food; 3, Clothes; 4, Warmth; 5, Cleanliness;

6, Health; 7, Love; 8, Beauty. These are only to be got in one way. I will state it. 1.—An International Congress must make a number of steam engines, or use those now made, and taking all property under its control (I fearlessly state it) must roll off iron and glass for buildings to shelter hundreds of millions of people. 2.—Must, by such engines, make steam apparatus to plough immense plains of wheat, where steam has elbow-room abroad; must make engines to grind it on an enormous scale, first fetching it in flat-bottomed ships, made of simple form, larger than the *Great Eastern*, and of simple form of plates, machine fastened; must bake it by machine ovens commensurate. 3.—Machine looms must work unattended night and day, rolling off textile yarns and fabrics, and machines must make clothes, just as envelopes are knocked off. 4.—Machinery must do laundress work, ironing and mangling; and, in a word, our labour must give place to machinery, laid down in gigantic factories on common-sense principles by an International leverage. This is the education you must inculcate. Then man will be at last emancipated. All else is utter bosh, and I will prove it so when and wherever I can get the means to lecture. WM. RIDDLE, C.E.

"SOUTH LAMBETH, *Nov.* 2."

Unfortunately, till those means can be obtained (may it be soon), it remains unriddled to us on what principles of "international leverage" the love and

beauty are to be provided. But the point I wish you mainly to notice is, that for this general emancipation, and elbow-room for men and steam, you are still required to find "immense plains of wheat abroad." Is it not probable that these immense plains may belong to somebody "abroad" already? And if not, instead of bringing home their produce in flat-bottomed ships, why not establish, on the plains themselves, your own flat-bottomed—I beg pardon,—flat-bellied, persons instead of living here in glass cases, which surely, even at the British Museum, cannot be associated in your minds with the perfect manifestation of love and beauty? It is true that love is to be measured, in your perfected political economy, by rectangular area, as you will find on reference to the ingenious treatise of Mr. W. Stanley Jevons, M.A., Professor of Logic and Political Economy in Owens College, Manchester, who informs you, among other interesting facts, that pleasure and pain "are the ultimate objects of the calculus of economy," and that a feeling, whether of pleasure or pain, may be regarded as having two dimensions—namely, in duration and intensity, so that the feeling, say of a minute, "may be represented by a rectangle whose base corresponds to the duration of a minute, and whose height is proportioned to the intensity."* The collective area of the series of rectangles will mark the "aggregate of feeling generated."

* I quote from the *Pall Mall Gazette* of January 16th.

But the Professor appears unconscious that there is a third dimension of pleasure and pain to be considered, besides their duration and intensity; and that this third dimension is to some persons, the most important of all—namely, their quality. It is possible to die of a rose in aromatic pain; and, on the contrary, for flies and rats, even pleasure may be the reverse of aromatic. There is swine's pleasure, and dove's; villain's pleasure, and gentleman's, to be arranged, the Professor will find, by higher analysis, in eternally dissimilar rectangles.

My friends, the follies of Modern Liberalism, many and great though they be, are practically summed in this denial or neglect of the quality and intrinsic value of things. Its rectangular beatitudes, and spherical benevolences,—theology of universal indulgence, and jurisprudence which will hang no rogues—mean, one and all of them, in the root, incapacity of discerning, or refusal to discern, worth and unworth in anything, and least of all in man; whereas Nature and Heaven command you, at your peril, to discern worth from unworth in everything, and most of all in man. Your main problem is that ancient and trite one, "Who is best man?" and the Fates forgive much,—forgive the wildest, fiercest, cruellest experiments,—if fairly made for the determination of that. Theft and blood-guiltiness are not pleasing in their sight; yet the favouring powers of the spiritual and material world will confirm to you your stolen goods; and their noblest voices applaud the lifting of your spear, and rehearse the

sculpture of your shield, if only your robbing and slaying have been in fair arbitrament of that question, "Who is best man?" But if you refuse such inquiry, and maintain every man for his neighbour's match,*—if you give vote to the simple, and liberty to the vile,—the powers of those spiritual and material worlds in due time present you inevitably with the same problem, soluble now only wrong side upwards; and your robbing and slaying must be done then to find out "Who is *worst* man?" Which, in so wide an order of merit, is, indeed, not easy; but a complete Tammany Ring, and lowest circle in the Inferno of Worst, you are sure to find, and to be governed by.

And you may note that the wars of men, in this winnowing or sifting function, separate themselves into three distinct stages. In healthy times of early national development, the best men go out to battle, and divide the spoil; in rare generosity, perhaps, giving as much to those who tarry by the stuff, as to those who have followed to the field. In the second, and more ingenious stage, which is the one we have reached now in England and America, the best men still go out to battle, and get

* Every man as good as his neighbour! you extremely sagacious English persons; and forthwith you establish competitive examination, which drives your boys into idiocy, before you will give them a bit of bread to make their young muscles of! Every man as good as his neighbour! and when I told you, seven years ago, that at least you should give every man his penny of wages, whether he was good or not, so only that he gave you the best that was in him, what did you answer to me?

themselves killed,—or, at all events, well withdrawn from public affairs,—and the worst stop at home, manage the government, and make money out of the commissariat. (See § 124 of 'Munera Pulveris,' and my note there on the last American War.) Then the third and last stage, immediately preceding the dissolution of any nation, is when its best men (such as they are)—stop at home too!—and pay other people to fight for them. And this last stage, not wholly reached in England yet, is, however, within near prospect; at least, if we may again on this point refer to, and trust, the anticipations of Mr. Grant Duff, "who racks his brains, without success, to think of any probable combination of European events in which the assistance of our English force would be half so useful to our allies as money."

Next month I will give you some farther account of the operations in favour of their Italian allies in the fourteenth century, effected by the White company under Sir John Hawkwood;—(they first crossed the Alps with a German captain, however,)—not at all consisting in disbursements of money; but such, on the contrary, as to obtain for them—(as you read in my first Letter) the reputation, with good Italian judges, of being the best thieves known at the time. It is in many ways important for you to understand the origin and various tendencies of mercenary warfare; the essential power of which, in Christendom, dates, singularly enough, from the struggle of the free burghers of Italy with

a Tory gentleman, a friend of Frederick II. of Germany; the quarrel, of which you shall hear the prettiest parts, being one of the most dramatic and vital passages of mediæval history. Afterwards we shall be able to examine, more intelligently, the prospects in store for us according to the—I trust not too painfully racked,—brains of our Under Secretary of State. But I am tired to-day of following modern thought in these unexpectedly attenuated conditions; and I believe you will also be glad to rest, with me, by reading a few words of true history of such life as, in here and there a hollow of the rocks of Europe, just persons have sometimes lived, untracked by the hounds of war. And in laying them before you, I begin to give these letters the completed character I intend for them; first, as it may seem to me needful, commenting on what is passing at the time, with reference always to the principles and plans of economy I have to set before you; and then collecting out of past literature, and in occasional frontispieces of woodcuts, out of past art, what may confirm or illustrate things that are for ever true: choosing the pieces of the series so that, both in art and literature, they may become to you in the strictest sense, educational, and familiarise you with the look and manner of fine work.

I want you, accordingly, now to read attentively some pieces of agricultural economy, out of Marmontel's 'Contes Moraux,'—(we too grandly translate the title into 'Moral Tales,' for the French

word Mœurs does not in accuracy correspond to our Morals); and I think it first desirable that you should know something about Marmontel himself. He was a French gentleman of the old school; not noble, nor, in French sense, even "gentilhomme;" but a peasant's son, who made his way into Parisian society by gentleness, wit, and a dainty and candid literary power. He became one of the humblest, yet honestest, placed scholars at the court of Louis XV., and wrote pretty, yet wise, sentimental stories, in finished French, which I must render as I can in broken English; but, however rudely translated, the sayings and thoughts in them deserve your extreme attention, for in their fine tremulous way, like the blossoming heads of grass in May, they are perfect. For introduction then, you shall have, to-day, his own description of his native place, Bort, in central south France, and of the circumstances of his child-life. You must take it without further preamble—my pages running short.

"Bort, situated on the river Dordogne, between Auvergne and the province of Limoges, is a frightful place enough, seen by the traveller descending suddenly on it; lying, as it does, at the bottom of a precipice and looking as if the storm torrents would sweep it away, or as if, some day, it must be crushed under a chain of volcanic rocks, some planted like towers on the height which commands the town, and others already overhanging, or half uprooted: but, once in the valley, and with the eye free to wander there, Bort becomes full of smiles.

Above the town, on a green island which the river embraces with equal streams, there is a thicket peopled with birds, and animated also with the motion and noise of a mill. On each side of the river are orchards and fields, cultivated with laborious care. Below the village the valley opens, on one side of the river, into a broad, flat meadow, watered by springs; on the other, into sloping fields, crowned by a belt of hills whose soft slope contrasts with the opposing rocks, and is divided, farther on, by a torrent which rolls and leaps through the forest, and falls into the Dordogne in one of the most beautiful cataracts on the Continent. Near that spot is situated the little farm of St. Thomas, where I used to read Virgil under the blossoming trees that surrounded our bee-hives, and where I made delicious lunches of their honey. On the other side of the town, above the mill, and on the slope to the river, was the enclosure where, on fête days, my father took me to gather grapes from the vines he had himself planted, or cherries, plums, and apples, from the trees he had grafted.

"But what in my memory is the chief charm of my native place is the impression of the affection which my family had for me, and with which my soul was penetrated in earliest infancy. If there is any goodness in my character, it is to these sweet emotions, and the perpetual happiness of loving and being loved that I believe it is owing. What a gift does Heaven bestow on us in the virtue of parents!

"I owed much also to a certain gentleness of manners which reigned then in my native town; and truly the sweet and simple life that one led there must have had a strange attraction, for nothing was more unusual than that the children of Bort should ever go away from it. In their youth they were well educated, and in the neighbouring colleges their colony distinguished itself; but they came back to their homes as a swarm of bees comes back to the hive with its spoil.

"I learned to read in a little convent where the nuns were friends of my mother. Thence I passed to the school of a priest of the town, who gratuitously, and for his own pleasure, devoted himself to the instruction of children; he was the only son of a shoemaker, one of the honestest fellows in the world; and this churchman was a true model of filial piety. I can yet remember, as if I had seen it but a moment since, the air of quiet courtesy and mutual regard which the old man and his son maintained to each other; the one never losing sight of the dignity of the priesthood, nor the other of the sanctity of the paternal character."

I interrupt my translation for a moment to ask you to notice how this finished scholar applies his words. A vulgar writer would most probably have said "the sanctity of the priesthood" and "the dignity of the paternal character." But it is quite possible that a priest may not be a saint, yet (admitting the theory of priesthood at all) his authority and office are not, therefore, invalidated.

On the other hand, a father may be entirely inferior to his son, incapable of advising him, and, if he be wise, claiming no strict authority over him. But the relation between the two is always sacred.

"The Abbé Vaissière" (that was his name), "after he had fulfilled his duty at the church, divided the rest of his time between reading, and the lessons he gave to us. In fine weather, a little walk, and sometimes for exercise a game at mall in the meadow, were his only amusements. For all society he had two friends, people of esteem in our town. They lived together in the most peaceful intimacy, seeing each other every day, and every day with the same pleasure in their meeting; and for fulfilment of good fortune, they died within a very little while of each other. I have scarcely ever seen an example of so sweet and constant equality in the course of human life.

"At this school I had a comrade, who was from my infancy an object of emulation to me. His deliberate and rational bearing, his industry in study, the care he took of his books, on which I never saw a stain; his fair hair always so well combed, his dress always fresh in its simplicity, his linen always white, were to me a constantly visible example; and it is rare that a child inspires another child with such esteem as I had for him. His father was a labourer in a neighbouring village, and well known to mine. I used to walk with his son to see him in his home. How he used to receive us, the white-haired old man,—the good cream! the

good brown bread that he gave us! and what happy presages did he not please himself in making for my future life, because of my respect for his old age. Twenty years afterwards, his son and I met at Paris; I recognized in him the same character of prudence and kindness which I had known in him at school, and it has been to me no slight pleasure to name one of his children at baptism.

"When I was eleven years old, just passed, my master judged me fit to enter the fourth class of students; and my father consented, though unwillingly, to take me to the College of Mauriac. His reluctance was wise. I must justify it by giving some account of our household.

"I was the eldest of many children; my father, a little rigid, but entirely good under his severe manner, loved his wife to idolatry; and well he might! I have never been able to understand how, with the simple education of our little convent at Bort, she had attained so much pleasantness in wit, so much elevation in heart, and a sentiment of propriety so just, pure, and subtle. My good Bishop of Limoges has often spoken to me since, at Paris, with most tender interest, of the letters that my mother wrote in recommending me to him.

"My father revered her as much as he loved; and blamed her only for her too great tenderness for me: but my grandmother loved me no less. I think I see her yet—the good little old woman! the bright nature that she had! the gentle gaiety! Economist of the house, she presided over its management, and

was an example to us all of filial tenderness, for she had also her own mother and her husband's mother to take care of. I am now dating far back, being just able to remember my great-grandmother drinking her little cup of wine at the corner of the hearth; but, during the whole of my childhood, my grandmother and her three sisters lived with us, and among all these women, and a swarm of children, my father stood alone, their support. With little means enough, all could live. Order, economy, and labour,—a little commerce, but above all things, frugality" (Note again the good scholar's accuracy of language: "Economy" the right arrangement of things, "Frugality" the careful and fitting use of them)—"these maintained us all in comfort. The little garden produced vegetables enough for the need of the house; the orchard gave us fruit, and our quinces, apples, and pears, preserved in the honey of our bees, made, during the winter, for the children and old women, the most exquisite breakfasts."

I interrupt again to explain to you, once for all, a chief principle with me in translation. Marmontel says, "for the children and *good* old women." Were I quoting the French, I would give his exact words; but, in translating, I miss the word "good," of which I know you are not likely to see the application at the moment. You would not see why the old women should be called good, when the question is only what they had for breakfast. Marmontel means that if they had been bad old women they would have wanted gin and bitters for breakfast, instead of

honey-candied quinces; but I can't always stop to tell you Marmontel's meaning, or other people's; and therefore, if I think it not likely to strike you, and the word weakens the sentence in the direction I want you to follow, I omit it in translating, as I do also entire sentences, here and there; but never, as aforesaid, in actual quotation.

"The flock of the fold of St. Thomas, clothed, with its wool, now the women, and now the children; my aunt spun it, and spun also the hemp which made our under-dress; the children of our neighbours came to beat it with us in the evening by lamp-light, (our own walnut trees giving us the oil,) and formed a ravishing picture. The harvest of our little farm assured our subsistence; the wax and honey of our bees, of which one of my aunts took extreme care, were a revenue, with little capital. The oil of our fresh walnuts had flavour and smell, which we liked better than those of the oil-olive, and our cakes of buck-wheat, hot, with the sweet butter of Mont Dor, were for us the most inviting of feasts. By the fire-side, in the evening, while we heard the pot boiling with sweet chestnuts in it, our grandmother would roast a quince under the ashes and divide it among us children. The most sober of women made us all gourmands. Thus, in a household, where nothing was ever lost, very little expense supplied all our further wants; the dead wood of the neighbouring forests was in abundance, the fresh mountain butter and most delicate cheese cost little; even wine was not dear, and my father used it soberly."

That is as much, I suppose, as you will care for at once. Insipid enough, you think?—or perhaps, in one way, too sapid; one's soul and affections mixed up so curiously with quince-marmalade? It is true, the French have a trick of doing that; but why not take it the other way, and say, one's quince-marmalade mixed up with affection? We adulterate our affections in England, now-a-days, with a yellower, harder, baser thing than that; and there would surely be no harm in our confectioners putting a little soul into their sugar,—if they put in nothing worse?

But as to the simplicity—or, shall we say, wateriness,—of the style, I can answer you more confidently. Milkiness would be a better word, only one does not use it of styles. This writing of Marmontel's is different from the writing you are accustomed to, in that there is never an exaggerating phrase in it—never a needlessly strained or metaphorical word, and never a misapplied one. Nothing is said pithily, to show the author's power, diffusely, to show his observation, nor quaintly, to show his fancy. He is not thinking of himself as an author at all; but of himself as a boy. He is not remembering his native valley as a subject for fine writing, but as a beloved real place, about which he may be garrulous, perhaps, but not rhetorical. But *is* it, or was it, or could it ever be, a real place indeed?—you will ask next. Yes, real in the severest sense; with realities that are to last for ever, when this London and Manchester life of

yours shall have become a horrible, and, but on evidence, incredible, romance of the past.

Real, but only partially seen; still more partially told. The rightnesses only perceived; the felicities only remembered; the landscape seen as if spring lasted always; the trees in blossom or fruitage evermore: no shedding of leaf: of winter, nothing remembered but its fireside.

Yet not untrue. The landscape is indeed there, and the life; seen through glass that dims them, but not distorts; and which is only dim to Evil.

But now supply, with your own undimmed insight and better knowledge of human nature; or invent, with imaginative malice, what evil you think necessary to make the picture true. Still—make the worst of it you will—it cannot but remain somewhat incredible to you, like the pastoral scene in a pantomime, more than a piece of history.

Well; but the pastoral scene in a pantomime itself,—tell me,—is it meant to be a bright or a gloomy part of your Christmas spectacle? Do you mean it to exhibit, by contrast, the blessedness of your own life, in the streets outside; or, for one fond and foolish half-hour, to recall the "ravishing picture" of days long lost? "The sheep-fold of St. Thomas," (you have at least, in him, an incredulous saint, and fit patron of a Republic at once holy and enlightened), the green island full of singing birds, the cascade in the forest, the vines on the steep river-shore;—the little Marmontel reading his Virgil in the shade, with murmur of bees round

him in the sunshine;—the fair-haired comrade, so gentle, so reasonable, and, marvel of marvels, beloved for being exemplary! Is all this incredible to you in its good, or in its evil? Those children rolling on the heaps of black and slimy ground, mixed with brickbats and broken plates and bottles, in the midst of Preston or Wigan, as edified travellers behold them when the station is blocked, and the train stops anywhere outside,—the children themselves, black, and in rags evermore, and the only water near them either boiling, or gathered in unctuous pools, covered with rancid clots of scum, in the lowest holes of the earth-heaps,—why do you not paint these for pastime? Are they not what your machine gods have produced for you? The mighty iron arms are visibly there at work;—no St. Thomas can be incredulous about the existence of gods such as they,—day and night at work,—omnipotent, if not resplendent. Why do you not rejoice in these; appoint a new Christmas for these, in memory of the Nativity of Boilers, and put their realms of black bliss into new Arcadias of Pantomime—the harlequin, mask all over? Tell me, my practical friends.

Believe me, faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

## LETTER XV

### *THE FOUR FUNERALS*

DENMARK HILL,
*1st March*, 1872.

MY FRIENDS,—

THE Tory gentleman whose character I have to sketch for you, in due counterbalance of that story of republican justice in California, was, as I told you, the friend of Friedrich II. of Germany, another great Friedrich preceding the Prussian one by some centuries, and living quite as hard a life of it. But before I can explain to you anything either about him, or his friend, I must develop the statement made above (XI. 212), of the complex modes of injustice respecting the means of maintenance, which have hitherto held in all ages among the three great classes of soldiers, clergy, and peasants. I mean, by 'peasants' the producers of food, out of land or water; by 'clergy,' men who live by teaching or exhibition of behaviour; and by 'soldiers,' those who live by fighting, either by robbing wise peasants, or getting themselves paid by foolish ones. Into these three classes the world's multitudes are essentially hitherto divided. The legitimate merchant of course exists, and can exist, only on the small percentage of pay obtainable for the transfer

of goods; and the manufacturer and artist are, in healthy society, developed states of the peasant. The morbid power of manufacture and commerce in our own age is an accidental condition of national decrepitude; the injustices connected with it are mainly those of the gambling-house, and quite unworthy of analytical inquiry; but the unjust relations of the soldier, clergyman, and peasant have hitherto been constant in all great nations;—they are full of mystery and beauty in their iniquity; they require the most subtle, and deserve the most reverent, analysis.

The first root of distinction between the soldier and peasant is in barrenness and fruitfulness of possessed ground; the inhabitant of sands and rocks "redeeming his share" (see speech of Roderick in the 'Lady of the Lake') from the inhabitant of corn-bearing ground. The second root of it is delight in athletic exercise, resulting in beauty of person and perfectness of race, and causing men to be content, or even triumphant, in accepting continual risk of death, if by such risk they can escape the injury of servile toil.

Again, the first root of distinction between clergyman and peasant is the greater intelligence, which instinctively desires both to learn and teach, and is content to accept the smallest maintenance, if it may remain so occupied. (Look back to Marmontel's account of his tutor.)

The second root of distinction is that which gives rise to the word 'clergy,' properly signifying persons

chosen by lot, or in a manner elect, for the practice and exhibition of good behaviour; the visionary or passionate anchorite being content to beg his bread, so only that he may have leave by undisturbed prayer or meditation, to bring himself into closer union with the spiritual world; and the peasant being always content to feed him, on condition of his becoming venerable in that higher state, and, as a peculiarly blessed person, a communicator of blessing.

Now, both these classes of men remain noble, as long as they are content with daily bread, if they may be allowed to live in their own way; but the moment the one of them uses his strength, and the other his sanctity, to get riches with, or pride of elevation over other men, both of them become tyrants, and capable of any degree of evil. Of the clerk's relation to the peasant, I will only tell you, now, that, as you learn more of the history of Germany and Italy in the Middle Ages, and, indeed, almost to this day, you will find the soldiers of Germany are always trying to get mastery over the body of Italy, and the clerks of Italy are always trying to get mastery over the mind of Germany;—this main struggle between Emperor and Pope, as the respective heads of the two parties, absorbing in its vortex, or attracting to its standards, all the minor disorders and dignities of war; and quartering itself in a quaintly heraldic fashion with the methods of encroachment on the peasant, separately invented by baron and priest.

The relation of the baron to the peasant, however, is all that I can touch upon to-day; and first, note that this word 'baron' is the purest English you can use to denote the soldier, soldato, or 'fighter, hired with pence, or soldi,' as such. Originally it meant the servant of a soldier, or, as a Roman clerk of Nero's time* tells us, (the literary antipathy thus early developing itself in its future nest,) "the extreme fool, who is a fool's servant;" but soon it came to be associated with a Greek word meaning 'heavy'; and so got to signify heavy-handed, or heavy-armed, or generally prevailing in manhood. For some time it was used to signify the authority of a husband; a woman called herself her husband's† 'ancilla,' (handmaid), and him her 'baron.' Finally the word got settled in the meaning of a strong fighter receiving regular pay. "Mercenaries are persons who serve for a regularly received pay; the same are called 'Barones' from the Greek, because they are strong in labours." This is the definition given by an excellent clerk of the seventh century, Isidore, Bishop of Seville, and I wish you to recollect it, because it perfectly unites the economical idea of a Baron, as a person paid for fighting, with the physical idea of one, as prevailing in battle by weight, not without some attached idea of slight stupidity;—the notion holding so distinctly even to

* Cornutus, quoted by Ducange under the word 'Baro.'

† I am told in the north such pleasant fiction still holds in the Teesdale district; the wife calling her husband 'my masterman.'

this day that Mr. Matthew Arnold thinks the entire class aptly describable under the term 'barbarians.'

At all events, the word is the best general one for the dominant rank of the Middle Ages, as distinguished from the pacific peasant, and so delighting in battle that one of the most courteous barons of the fourteenth century tells a young knight who comes to him for general advice, that the moment war fails in any country, he must go into another.

"Et se la guerre est faillie,
Départie
Fay tost de cellui païs ;
N'arreste quoy que nul die."

"And if the war has ended,
Departure
Make quickly from that country ;
Do not stop, whatever anybody says to you." *

But long before this class distinction was clearly established, the more radical one between pacific and warrior *nations* had shown itself cruelly in the history of Europe.

You will find it greatly useful to fix in your minds these following elementary ideas of that history :—

The Roman Empire was already in decline at the birth of Christ. It was ended five hundred years afterwards. The wrecks of its civilization, mingled with the broken fury of the tribes which had destroyed it, were then gradually softened and purged by Christianity; and hammered into shape by three

* 'The Book of a Hundred Ballads.' You shall hear more of them, soon.

great warrior nations, on the north, south, and west, worshippers of the storms, of the sun, and of fate. Three Christian kings, Henry the Fowler of Germany, Charlemagne in France, and Alfred in England, typically represent the justice of humanity, gradually forming the feudal system out of the ruined elements of Roman luxury and law, under the disciplining torment inflicted by the mountaineers of Scandinavia, India, and Arabia.

This forging process takes another five hundred years. Christian feudalism may be considered as definitely organized at the end of the tenth century, and its political strength established, having for the most part absorbed the soldiers of the north, and soon to be aggressive on those of Mount Imaus and Mount Sinai. It lasts another five hundred years, and then our own epoch, that of atheistic liberalism, begins, practically necessitated,—the liberalism by the two discoveries of gunpowder and printing,—and the atheism by the unfortunate persistence of the clerks in teaching children what they cannot understand, and employing young consecrated persons to assert in pulpits what they do not know.

That is enough generalization for you to-day. I want now to fix your thoughts on one small point in all this ;—the effect of the discovery of gunpowder in promoting liberalism.

Its first operation was to destroy the power of the baron, by rendering it impossible for him to hold his castle, with a few men, against a mob. The fall of the Bastile is a typical fact in history

of this kind; but, of course long previously, castellated architecture had been felt to be useless. Much other building of a noble kind vanishes together with it; nor less (which is a much greater loss than the building,) the baronial habit of living in the country.

Next to his castle, the baron's armour becomes useless to him; and all the noble habits of life vanish which depend on the wearing of a distinctive dress, involving the constant exercise of accurately disciplined strength, and the public assertion of an exclusive occupation in life, involving exposure to danger.

Next, the baron's sword and spear become useless to him; and encounter, no longer the determination of who is best man, but of who is best marksman, which is a very different question indeed.

Lastly, the baron being no more able to maintain his authority by force, seeks to keep it by form; he reduces his own subordinates to a fine machinery, and obtains the command of it by purchase or intrigue. The necessity of distinction of character is in war so absolute, and the tests of it are so many, that, in spite of every abuse, good officers get sometimes the command of squadrons or of ships; and one good officer in a hundred is enough to save the honour of an army, and the credit of a system; but generally speaking, our officers at this day do not know their business; and the result is—that, paying thirty millions a year for our army, we are informed by Mr. Grant Duff that the army we have bought is of no use, and we must pay still more money to

produce any effect upon foreign affairs. So, you see, this is the actual state of things,—and it is the perfection of liberalism,—that first we cannot buy a Raphael for five-and-twenty pounds, because we have to pay five hundred for a pocket pistol; and next, we are coolly told that the pocket pistol won't go off, and that we must still pay foreign constables to keep the peace.

In old times, under the pure baronial power, things used, as I told you, to be differently managed by us. We were, all of us, in some sense barons; and paid *ourselves* for fighting. We had no pocket pistols, nor Woolwich Infants—nothing but bows and spears, good horses, (I hear, after two-thirds of our existing barons have ruined their youth in horse-racing, and a good many of them their fortunes also, we are now in irremediable want of horses for our cavalry,) and bright armour. Its brightness, observe, was an essential matter with us. Last autumn I saw, even in modern England, something bright; low sunshine at seven o'clock of an October morning, glancing down a long bank of fern covered with hoar-frost, in Yewdale, at the head of Coniston Water. I noted it as more beautiful than anything I had ever seen, to my remembrance, in gladness and infinitude of light. Now, Scott uses this very image to describe the look of the chain-mail of a soldier in one of these free*

* This singular use of the word 'free' in baronial times, corresponding to our present singular use of it respecting trade, we will examine in due time. A soldier who fights only for his own hand,

companies;—Le Balafré, Quentin Durward's uncle: "The archer's gorget, arm-pieces, and gauntlets were of the finest steel, curiously inlaid with silver, and his hauberk, or shirt of mail, was as clear and bright as the frost-work of a winter morning upon fern or briar." And Sir John Hawkwood's men, of whose proceedings in Italy I have now to give you some account, were named throughout Italy, as I told you in my first letter, the White Company of English,—'Societas alba Anglicorum,' or generally, the Great White Company, merely from the splendour of their arms. They crossed the Alps in 1361, and immediately caused a curious change in the Italian language. Azario lays great stress on their tall spears with a very long iron point at the extremity; this formidable weapon being for the most part wielded by two, and sometimes moreover by three individuals, being so heavy and huge, that whatever it came in contact with was pierced through and through. He says, that* "at their backs the mounted bowmen carried their bows; whilst those used by the infantry archers were so enormous that the long arrows discharged from them were shot with one end of the bow resting on the ground instead of being drawn in the air."

Of the English bow you have probably heard

and a merchant who sells only for his own hand, are of course, in reality, equally the slaves of the persons who employ them. Only those soldiers and merchants are truly free, who fight and sell as their country needs, and bids them.

* I always give Mr. Rawdon Brown's translation, from his work, 'The English in Italy,' already quoted.

before, though I shall have, both of it, and the much inferior Greek bow made of two goats' horns, to tell you some things that may not have come in your way; but the change these English caused in the Italian language, and afterwards generally in that of chivalry, was by their use of the spear; for "Filippo Villani tells us that, whereas, 'until the English company crossed the Alps, his countrymen numbered their military forces by 'helmets' and colour companies, (bandiere); thenceforth armies were reckoned by the *spear*, a weapon which, when handled by the White Company, proved no less tremendous than the English bayonet of modern times."

It is worth noting as one of the tricks of the third Fors—the giver of names as well as fortunes—that the name of the chief poet of passionate Italy should have been 'the bearer of the wing,' and that of the chief poet of practical England, the bearer or shaker of the spear. Noteworthy also that Shakespeare himself gives a name to his type of the false soldier from the pistol; but, in the future, doubtless we shall have a hero of culminating soldierly courage named from the torpedo, and a poet of the commercial period, singing the wars directed by Mr. Grant Duff, named Shake-purse.

The White Company when they crossed the Alps were under a German captain. (Some years before, an entirely German troop was prettily defeated by the Apennine peasants.) Sir John Hawkwood did not take the command until 1364, when the Pisans hired the company, five thousand strong, at

the rate of a hundred and fifty thousand golden florins for six months—I think about fifty thousand pounds of our money a month, or ten pounds a man—Sir John himself being then described as a "great general," an Englishman of a vulpine nature, "and astute in *their* fashion." This English fashion of astuteness means, I am happy to say, that Sir John saw far, planned deeply, and was cunning in military stratagem; but would neither poison his enemies nor sell his friends—the two words of course being always understood as for the time being;—for, from this year 1364 for thirty years onward, he leads his gradually more and more powerful soldier's life, fighting first for one town and then for another; here for bishops, and there for barons, but mainly for those merchants of Florence, from whom that narrow street in your city is named Lombard Street, and interfering thus so decidedly with foreign affairs, that, at the end of the thirty years, when he put off his armour, and had lain resting for a little while in Florence Cathedral, King Richard the Second begged his body from the Florentines, and laid it in his own land; the Florentines granting it in the terms of this following letter:—

"To the King of England.

"Most serene and invincible Sovereign, most dread Lord, and our very especial Benefactor—

"Our devotion can deny nothing to your Highness' Eminence: there is nothing in our power

which we would not strive by all means to accomplish, should it prove grateful to you.

"Wherefore, although we should consider it glorious for us and our people to possess the dust and ashes of the late valiant knight, nay, most renowned captain, Sir John Hawkwood, who fought most gloriously for us, as the commander of our armies, and whom at the public expense we caused to be entombed in the Cathedral Church of our city; yet, notwithstanding, according to the form of the demand, that his remains may be taken back to his country, we freely concede the permission, lest it be said that your sublimity asked anything in vain, or fruitlessly, of our reverential humility.

"We, however, with due deference, and all possible earnestness, recommend to your Highness' graciousness, the son and posterity of said Sir John, who acquired no mean repute, and glory for the English name in Italy, as also our merchants and citizens."

It chanced by the appointment of the third Fors,* to which, you know, I am bound in these letters uncomplainingly to submit, that, just as I had looked out this letter for you, given at Florence in the year 1396, I found in an old bookshop two gazettes nearly three hundred years later, namely, Number 20 of the *Mercurius Publicus*, and Number 50 of the *Paliamentary Intelligencer*, the latter

* Remember, briefly always, till I can tell you more about it, that the first Fors is Courage, the second Patience, the third, Fortune.

comprising the same "foraign intelligence, with the affairs now in agitation in England, Scotland, and Ireland, for information of the people. Publish'd by order, from Monday, December 3rd, to Monday, December 10th, 1660." This little gazette informs us in its first advertisement, that in London, November 30th, 1660, was lost, in or about this city, a small paper book of accounts and receipts, with a red leather cover, with two clasps on it; and that anybody that can give intelligence of it to the city crier at Bread Street end in Cheapside, "shall have five shillings for their pains, and more if they desire it." And its last paragraph is as follows:—"On Saturday (December 8), the Most Honourable House of Peers concurred with the Commons in the order for the digging up the carkasses of Oliver Cromwell, Henry Ireton, John Bradshaw, and Thomas Pride, and carrying them on an Hurdle to Tyburn, where they are to be first hang'd up in their Coffins, and then buried under the Gallows."

The *Public Mercury* is of date Thursday, June 14th, to Thursday, June 21st, 1660, and contains a report of the proceeding at the House of Commons, on Saturday, the 16th, of which the first sentence is:

"RESOLVED,—That his Majesty be humbly moved to call in Milton's two books, and John Goodwin's, and order them to be burnt by the common hangman."

By the final appointment of the third Fors, I chanced just after finding these gazettes, to

come upon the following passage in my *Daily Telegraph*:—

"Every head was uncovered, and although among those who were farthest off there was a pressing forward and a straining to catch sight of the coffin, there was nothing unseemly or rude. The Catafalque was received at the top of the stairs by Col. Braine and other officers of the 9th, and placed in the centre of the vestibule on a rich velvet pall on which rested crowns, crosses, and other devices, composed of tuberoses and camellias, while beautiful lilies were scattered over the corpse, which was clothed in full regimentals, the cap and sword resting on the body. The face, with the exception of its pallor, was unchanged, and no one, unless knowing the circumstances, would have believed that Fiske had died a violent death. The body was contained in a handsome rosewood casket, with gold-plated handles, and a splendid plate bearing the inscription, 'James Fiske, jun., died January 7th, 1872, in the 37th year of his age.'

In the foregoing passages, you see, there is authentic account given you of the various honours rendered by the enlightened public of the fourteenth, seventeenth, and nineteenth centuries to the hero of their day or hour; the persons thus reverenced in their burial, or unburial, being all, by profession, soldiers; and holding rank in that profession, very properly describable by the pretty modern English

word 'Colonel'—leader, that is to say, of a Coronel. Coronella, or daisy-like circlet of men; as in the last case of the three before us, of the Tammany 'Ring.'

You are to observe, however, that the first of the three, Colonel Sir John Hawkwood, is a soldier both in heart and deed, every inch of him; and that the second, Colonel Oliver Cromwell, was a soldier in deed, but not in heart; being by natural disposition and temper fitted rather for a Huntingdonshire farmer, and not at all caring to make any money by his military business; and finally, that Colonel James Fiske, jun., was a soldier in heart, to the extent of being willing to receive any quantity of soldi from any paymaster, but no more a soldier in deed than you are yourselves, when you go piping and drumming past my gate at Denmark Hill (I should rather say—banging, than drumming, for I observe you hit equally hard and straightforward to every tune; so that from a distance it sounds just like beating carpets), under the impression that you are defending your country as well as amusing yourselves.

Of the various honours, deserved, or undeserved, done by enlightened public opinion to these three soldiers, I leave you to consider till next month, merely adding, to put you more entirely in command of the facts, that Sir John Hawkwood, (Acuto, the Italians called him, by happy adaptation of syllables,) whose entire subsistence was one of systematic military robbery, had, when he was first buried, the honour, rarely granted even to the citizens of

Florence, of having his coffin laid on the font of the House of his name-saint, St. John Baptist — that same font which Dante was accused of having impiously broken to save a child from drowning, in "mio bel San Giovanni." I am soon going to Florence myself to draw this beautiful San Giovanni for the beginning of my lectures on Architecture, at Oxford; and you shall have a print of the best sketch I can make, to assist your meditations on the honours of soldiership, and efficacy of baptism. Meantime, let me ask you to read an account of one funeral more, and to meditate also on that. It is given in the most exquisite and finished piece which I know of English Prose literature in the eighteenth century; and, however often you may have seen it already, I beg of you to read it now, both in connection with the funeral ceremonies described hitherto, and for the sake of its educational effect on your own taste in writing:

"We last night received a piece of ill news at our club, which very sensibly afflicted every one of us. I question not but my readers themselves will be troubled at the hearing of it. To keep them no longer in suspense, Sir Roger de Coverley is dead. He departed this life at his house in the country, after a few weeks' sickness. Sir Andrew Freeport has a letter from one of his correspondents in those parts, that informs him the old man caught a cold at the county-sessions, as he was very warmly promoting an address of his own penning, in which he succeeded according to his wishes.

But this particular comes from a Whig justice of peace who was always Sir Roger's enemy and antagonist. I have letters both from the chaplain and Captain Sentry, which mention nothing of it, but are filled with many particulars to the honour of the good old man. I have likewise a letter from the butler, who took so much care of me last summer when I was at the knight's house. As my friend the butler mentions, in the simplicity of his heart, several circumstances the others have passed over in silence, I shall give my reader a copy of his letter, without any alteration or diminution.

"'HONOURED SIR,—Knowing that you was my old master's good friend, I could not forbear sending you the melancholy news of his death, which has afflicted the whole country, as well as his poor servants, who loved him, I may say, better than we did our lives. I am afraid he caught his death the last county-sessions, where he would go to see justice done to a poor widow woman, and her fatherless children, that had been wronged by a neighbouring gentleman; for you know, Sir, my good master was always the poor man's friend. Upon his coming home, the first complaint he made was, that he had lost his roast-beef stomach, not being able to touch a sirloin, which was served up according to custom: and you know he used to take great delight in it. From that time forward he grew worse and worse, but still kept a good heart to the last. Indeed we were once in great hope

of his recovery, upon a kind message that was sent him from the widow lady whom he had made love to the forty last years of his life; but this only proved a lightning before death. He has bequeathed to this lady, as a token of his love, a great pearl necklace, and a couple of silver bracelets set with jewels, which belonged to my good old lady his mother. He has bequeathed the fine white gelding that he used to ride a hunting upon, to his chaplain, because he thought he would be kind to him, and has left you all his books. He has moreover bequeathed to the chaplain a very pretty tenement with good lands about it. It being a very cold day when he made his will, he left for mourning to every man in the parish, a great frize-coat, and to every woman a black riding-hood. It was a most moving sight to see him take leave of his poor servants, commending us all for our fidelity, whilst we were not able to speak a word for weeping. As we most of us are grown grey-headed in our dear master's service, he has left us pensions and legacies, which we may live very comfortably upon the remaining part of our days. He has bequeathed a great deal more in charity, which is not yet come to my knowledge, and it is peremptorily said in the parish, that he has left money to build a steeple to the church; for he was heard to say some time ago, that if he lived two years longer, Coverley church should have a steeple to it. The chaplain tells every body that he made a very good end, and never speaks of him without tears. He was buried according to his own

directions, among the family of the Coverleys, on the left hand of his father Sir Arthur. The coffin was carried by six of his tenants, and the pall held up by six of the quorum. The whole parish followed the corpse with heavy hearts, and in their mourning suits; the men in frize, and the women in riding-hoods. Captain Sentry, my master's nephew, has taken possession of the Hall-house, and the whole estate. When my old master saw him a little before his death, he took him by the hand, and wished him joy of the estate which was falling to him, desiring him only to make a good use of it, and to pay the several legacies, and the gifts of charity, which he told him he had left as quit-rents upon the estate. The captain truly seems a courteous man, though he says but little. He makes much of those whom my master loved, and shews great kindness to the old house-dog, that you know my poor master was so fond of. It would have gone to your heart to have heard the moans the dumb creature made on the day of my master's death. He has never enjoyed himself since; no more has any of us. It was the melancholiest day for the poor people that ever happened in Worcestershire. This is all from,

"'Honoured Sir,

"'Your most sorrowful servant,

"'EDWARD BISCUIT.

"'*P.S.*—My master desired, some weeks before he died, that a book, which comes up to you by the

carrier, should be given to Sir Andrew Freeport in his name.'

"This letter, notwithstanding the poor butler's manner of writing it, gave us such an idea of our good old friend, that upon the reading of it there was not a dry eye in the club. Sir Andrew opening the book, found it to be a collection of acts of parliament. There was in particular the Act of Uniformity, with some passages in it marked by Sir Roger's own hand. Sir Andrew found that they related to two or three points which he had disputed with Sir Roger the last time he appeared at the club. Sir Andrew, who would have been merry at such an incident on another occasion, at the sight of the old man's hand-writing burst into tears, and put the book into his pocket. Captain Sentry informs me that the knight has left rings and mourning for every one in the club."

I am obliged to give you this ideal of Addison's because I can neither from my own knowledge, nor, at this moment, out of any domestic chronicles I remember, give you so perfect an account of the funeral of an English squire who has lived an honourable life in peace. But Addison is as true as truth itself. So now, meditate over these four funerals, and the meaning and accuracy of the public opinions they express, till I can write again.

And believe me, ever faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

## LETTER XVI

*GOLD-GROWING*

DENMARK HILL,
MY FRIENDS,— *15th March*, 1872.

THE meditation I asked you to give to the facts put before you in my last letter, if given, should have convinced you for one thing, quite sufficiently for all your future needs, of the unimportance of momentary public opinion respecting the characters of men; and for another thing, of the preciousness of confirmed public opinion, when it happens to be right;—preciousness both to the person opined of, and the opiners;—as, for instance, to Sir Roger de Coverley, the opinion formed of him by his tenants and club: and for third thing, it might have properly led you to consider, though it was scarcely probable your thoughts should have turned that way, what an evil trick of human creatures it was to reserve the expression of these opinions—or even the examination of them, until the persons to be opined of are dead; and then to endeavour to put all right by setting their coffins on baptistery fonts—or hanging them up at Tyburn. Let me very strongly advise you to make up your minds concerning people, while they are with you;

to honour and obey those whom you consider good ones; to dishonour and disobey those whom you consider bad ones; and when good and bad ones die, to make no violent or expressive demonstrations of the feelings which have now become entirely useless to the persons concerned, and are only, as they are true or false, serviceable, or the contrary, to yourselves; but to take care that some memorial is kept of men who deserve memory, in a distinct statement on the stone or brass of their tombs, either that they were true men or rascals,—wise men or fools.

How beautiful the variety of sepulchral architecture might be, in any extensive place of burial, if the public would meet the small expense of thus expressing its opinions, in a verily instructive manner; and if some of the tombstones accordingly terminated in fools' caps; and others, instead of crosses or cherubs, bore engravings of cats-of-nine-tails, as typical of the probable methods of entertainment, in the next world, of the persons, not, it is to be hoped, reposing, below.

But the particular subject led up to in my last letter, and which, in this special month of April, I think it appropriate for you to take to heart, is the way in which you spend your money, or allow it to be spent for you. Colonel Hawkwood and Colonel Fiske both passed their whole lives in getting possession, by various means, of other people's money; (in the final fact, of working-men's money, — yours, that is to say), and everybody

praises and crowns them for doing so. Colonel Cromwell passes his life in fighting for, what in the gist of it meant, not freedom, but freedom from unjust taxation; —and you hang his coffin up at Tyburn.

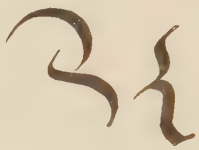
"Not Freedom, but deliverance from unjust taxation." You call me unpractical. Suppose you became practical enough yourselves to take that for a watchword for a little while, and see how near you can come to its realization.

For, I very positively can inform you, the considerablest part of the misery of the world comes of the tricks of unjust taxation. All its evil passions—pride, lust, revenge, malice, and sloth — derive their main deadliness from the facilities of getting hold of other people's money open to the persons they influence. Pay every man for his work,—pay nobody *but* for his work, —and see that the work be sound; and you will find pride, lust, and sloth have little room left for themselves.

Observe, however, very carefully, that by unjust taxation, I do not mean merely Chancellor of Exchequer's business, but a great part of what really very wise and worthy gentlemen, but, unfortunately, proud also, suppose to be their business.

For instance, before beginning my letter to you this morning, (the last I shall ever date from Denmark Hill,) I put out of my sight, carefully, under a large book, a legal document, which

disturbed me by its barbarous black lettering. This is an R



in it, for instance, which is ugly enough, as such; but how ugly is the significance of it, and reasons of its being written that way, instead of in a properly intelligible way, there is hardly vituperation enough in language justly to express to you. This said document is to release the sole remaining executor of my father's will from further responsibility for the execution of it. And all that there is really need for, of English scripture on the occasion, would be as follows:—

I, having received this 15th of March, 1872, from A. B., Esq., all the property which my father left, hereby release A. B., Esq., from future responsibility, respecting either my father's property, or mine, or my father's business, or mine. Signed, J. R., before such and such two witnesses.

This document, on properly cured calf-skin, (not cleaned by acids), and written as plainly as, after having contracted some careless literary habits, I could manage to write it, ought to answer the purpose required, before any court of law on earth.

In order to effect it in a manner pleasing to the present legal mind of England, I receive eighty-seven lines of close writing, containing from fourteen

to sixteen words each, (one thousand two hundred and eighteen words in all, at the minimum); thirteen of them in black letters of the lovely kind above imitated, but produced with much pains by the scrivener. Of the manner in which this overplus of one thousand one hundred and seventy-eight words is accomplished, (my suggested form containing forty only), the following example—the last clause of the document—may suffice.

"And the said J. R. doth hereby for himself his heirs executors and administrators covenant and agree with and to the said A. B. his executors and administrators that he the said J. R. his heirs executors administrators or assigns shall and will from time to time and at all times hereafter save harmless and keep indemnified the said A. B. his heirs executors administrators and assigns from and in respect of all claims and demands whatsoever which may be made upon him or them or any of them for or in respect of the real or personal estate of the said J. R. and from all suits costs charges and damages and expenses whatsoever which the said A. B. his heirs executors administrators or assigns shall be involved in or put unto for or in respect of the said real or personal estate or any part thereof."

Now, what reason do you suppose there is for all this barbarism and bad grammar, and tax upon my eyes and time, for very often one has actually to read these things, or hear them read, all through? The reason is simply and wholly that I may be charged so much per word, that the lawyer and his

clerk may live. But do you not see how infinitely advantageous it would be for me, (if only I could get the other sufferers under this black literature to be of my mind), to clap the lawyer and his clerk, once for all, fairly out of the way in a dignified almshouse, with parchment unlimited, and ink turned on at a tap, and maintenance for life, on the mere condition of their never troubling humanity more, with either their scriptures or opinions on any subject; and to have this release of mine, as above worded, simply confirmed by the signature of any person whom the Queen might appoint for that purpose, (say the squire of the parish), and there an end? How is it, do you think, that other sufferers under the black literature, do *not* come to be of my mind, which was Cicero's mind also, and has been the mind of every sane person before Cicero and since Cicero, - so that we might indeed get it ended thus summarily?

Well, at the root of all these follies and iniquities, there lies always one tacit, but infinitely strong persuasion in the British mind, namely, that somehow money grows out of nothing, if one can only find some expedient to produce an article that must be paid for. "Here," the practical Englishman says to himself, "I produce, being capable of nothing better, an entirely worthless piece of parchment, with one thousand two hundred entirely foolish words upon it, written in an entirely abominable hand; and by this production of mine, I conjure out of the vacant air, the substance of ten pounds,

or the like. What an infinitely profitable transaction to me and to the world! Creation, out of a chaos of words, and a dead beast's hide, of this beautiful and omnipotent ten pounds. Do I not see with my own eyes that this is very good?"

That is the real impression on the existing popular mind; silent, but deep, and for the present unconquerable. That by due parchment, caligraphy, and ingenious stratagem, money may be conjured out of the vacant air. Alchemy is, indeed, no longer included in our list of sciences, for alchemy proposed,—irrational science that it was,—to make money of *something;*—gold of lead, or the like. But to make money of *nothing*,—this appears to be manifoldly possible, to the modern Anglo-Saxon practical person,—instructed by Mr. John Stuart Mill. Sometimes, with rare intelligence, he is capable of carrying the inquiry one step farther. Pushed hard to assign a Providential cause for such legal documents as this we are talking of, an English gentleman would say: "Well, of course, where property needs legal forms to transfer it, it must be in quantity enough to bear a moderate tax without inconvenience; and this tax on its transfer enables many well-educated and agreeable persons to live."

Yes, that is so, and I (speaking for the nonce in the name of the working-man, maker of property) am willing enough to be taxed, straightforwardly, for the maintenance of these most agreeable persons; but not to be taxed obliquely for it, nor

teased, either obliquely or otherwise, for it. I greatly and truly admire (as aforesaid, in my first letter,) these educated persons in wigs; and when I go into my kitchen-garden in spring time, to see the dew on my early sprouts, I often mentally acknowledge the fitness, yet singularity, of the arrangement by which I am appointed to grow mute Broccoli for the maintenance of that talking Broccoli. All that I want of it is to let itself be kept for a show, and not to tax my time as well as my money.

Kept for a show, of heads; or, to some better purpose, for writing on fair parchment, with really well-trained hands, what might be desirable of literature. Suppose every existing lawyer's clerk was trained, in a good drawing school, to write red and blue letters as well as black ones, in a loving and delicate manner; here for instance is an R and a number eleven, which begin the eleventh chapter of Job in one of my thirteenth-century Bibles. There is as good a letter and as good a number—every one different in design, — to every chapter, and beautifully gilded and painted ones to the beginning of books; all done for love, and teasing nobody. Now suppose the lawyer's clerks, thus instructed to write

decently, were appointed to write for us, for their present pay, words really worth setting down—Nursery Songs, Grimm's Popular Stories, and the like, we should have again, not, perhaps, a cheap literature; but at least an innocent one. Dante's words might then be taken up literally by relieved mankind. "Più ridon le carte." "The papers smile more," they might say, of such transfigured legal documents.

Not a cheap literature, even then; nor pleasing to my friend the *Glasgow Herald*, who writes to me indignantly, but very civilly, (and I am obliged to him,) to declare that he is a Herald and not a Chronicle. I am delighted to hear it; for my lectures on heraldry are just beginning at Oxford, and a Glaswegian opinion may be useful to me, when I am not sure of my blazon. Also he tells me good leather may be had in Glasgow. Let Glasgow flourish, and I will assuredly make trial of the same: but touching this cheap literature question, I cannot speak much in this letter, for I must keep to our especial subject of April—this Fools' Paradise of Cloud-begotten Gold.

Cloud-begotten — and self-begotten — as some would have it. But it is not so, friends.

Do you remember the questioning to Job? The pretty letter R stopped me just now at the Response of Zophar; but look on to the thirty-eighth chapter, and read down to the question concerning this April time:—"Hath the rain a Father—and who hath begotten the drops of dew,—the hoary Frost of Heaven—who hath gendered it?"

That rain and frost of heaven; and the earth which they loose and bind: these, and the labour of your hands to divide them, and subdue, are your wealth, for ever—unincreasable. The fruit of Earth, and its waters, and its light—such as the strength of the pure rock can grow—such as the unthwarted sun in his season brings—these are your inheritance. You can diminish it, but cannot increase: that your barns should be filled with plenty—your presses burst with new wine,—is your blessing; and every year—when it is full—it must be new; and every year, no more.

And this money, which you think so multipliable, is only to be increased in the hands of some, by the loss of others. The sum of it, in the end, represents, and *can* represent, only what is in the barn and winepress. It may represent less, but cannot more.

These ten pounds, for instance, which I am grumbling at having to pay my lawyer—what are they? whence came they?

They were once, (and could be nothing now, unless they had been) so many skins of Xeres wine—grown and mellowed by pure chalk rock and unafflicted sunshine. Wine drunk, indeed, long ago — but the drinkers gave the vineyard dressers these tokens, which we call pounds, signifying, that having had so much good from them they would return them as much, in future time. And, indeed, for my ten pounds, if my lawyer didn't take it, I could still get my Xeres, if Xeres

wine exists anywhere. But, if not, what matters it how many pounds I have, or think I have, or you either? It is meat and drink we want—not pounds.

As you are beginning to discover—I fancy too many of you, in this rich country. If you only would discover it a little faster, and demand dinners, instead of Liberty! For what possible liberty do you want, which does not depend on dinner? Tell me, once for all, what is it you want to do, that you can't do? Dinner being provided, do you think the Queen will interfere with the way you choose to spend your afternoons, if only you knock nobody down, and break nobody's windows? But the need of dinner enslaves you to purpose!

The following letter represents this modern form of slavery with an unconscious clearness, which is very interesting. I have, therefore, requested the writer's permission to print it, and with a passage or two omitted, and briefest comment, here it is in full type, for it is worth careful reading:—

"GLASGOW,
*12th February*, 1872.

"SIR,

"You say in your 'Fors' that you do not want any one to buy your books who will not give a 'doctor's fee' per volume, which you rate at 10*s.* 6*d.*; now, as the *Herald* remarks, you are clearly placing yourself in a wrong position, as you arbitrarily fix *your* doctor's fee far too high; indeed, while you express a desire, no doubt quite

sincerely, to elevate the working-man, morally, mentally, and physically, you in the meantime absolutely preclude him from purchasing your books at all, and so almost completely bar his way from the enjoyment and elevating influence of perhaps the most" [etc., complimentary terms—omitted].

"Permit me a personal remark:—I am myself a poorly paid clerk, with a salary not much over the income-tax minimum; now no doctor, here at least, would ever think of charging me a fee of 10*s.* 6*d.*, and so you see it is as much out of my power to purchase your books as any working-man. While Mr. Carlyle is just now issuing a cheap edition of his Works at 2*s.* per volume, which I can purchase, here, quite easily for 1*s.* 6*d.*;" [Presumably, therefore, to be had, as far north as Inverness, for a shilling, and for sixpence in Orkney,] "I must say it is a great pity that a writer so much, and, in my poor opinion, justly appreciated as yourself, should as it were inaugurate with your own hands a system which thoroughly barriers your productions from the great majority of the middle and working classes. I take leave, however, to remark that I by no means shut my eyes to the anomalies of the Bookselling Trade, but I can't see that it can be remedied by an Author becoming his own Bookseller, and, *at the same time*, putting an unusually high price on his books. Of course, I would like to see an Author remunerated as highly as possible for his labours."

[You ought not to like any such thing: you ought to like an author to get what he deserves, like other people, not more, nor less.] "I would also crave to remark, following up your unfortunate analogy of the doctor's fee, that doctors who have acquired, either professionally or otherwise, a competence, often, nay very often, give their advice gratis to nearly every class, except that which is really wealthy; at least, I speak from my own experience, having known, nay even been attended by such a benevolent physician in a little town in Kirkcudbrightshire, who when offered payment, and I was both quite able and willing to do so, and he was in no way indebted or obliged to me or mine, positively declined to receive any fee. So much for the benevolent physician and his fees.

"Here am I, possessed of a passionate love of nature in all her aspects, cooped up in this fearfully crammed mass of population, with its filthy Clyde, which would naturally have been a noble river, but, under the curse of our much belauded civilization, forsooth, turned into an almost stagnant loathsome ditch, pestilence-breathing, be-lorded over by hundreds upon hundreds of tall brick chimney-stacks vomiting up smoke unceasingly; and from the way I am situated, there are only one day and a half in the week in which I can manage a walk into the country; now, if I wished to foster my taste for the beautiful in nature and art, even while living a life of almost servile red-taped routine beneath the too frequently

horror-breathing atmosphere of a huge overgrown plutocratic city like Glasgow, I cannot have your Works" [complimentary terms again] "as, after providing for my necessaries, I cannot indulge in books at 10*s.* 6*d.* a volume. Of course, as you may say" [My dear sir, the very last thing I should say], "I can get them from a library. Assuredly, but one (at least I would) wishes to have actual and ever-present possession of productions such as yours" [more compliments]. "You will be aware, no doubt, that 'Geo. Eliot' has adopted a 'new system' in publishing her new novel by issuing it in 5*s.* 'parts,' with the laudable view of enabling and encouraging readers to buy the work for themselves, and not trusting to get it from 'some Mudie' or another for a week, then galloping through the three volumes and immediately forgetting the whole matter. When I possess a book worth having I always recur to it now and again. *Your* 'new system,' however, tends to prevent the real reading public from ever possessing your books, and the wealthy classes who could afford to buy books at 10*s.* 6*d.* a volume, as a rule, I opine, don't drive themselves insane by much reading of any kind.

"I beg a last remark and I've done. Glasgow, for instance, has no splendid public buildings. She has increased in wealth till I believe there are some of the greatest merchants in the world trading in her Exchange; but except her grand old Cathedral, founded by an almost-forgotten bishop in the twelfth

century, in what we in our vain folly are pleased to call the dark ages, when we ourselves are about as really dark as need be; having no 'high calling' to strive for, except by hook or by crook to make money—a fortune—retire at thirty-five by some stroke of gambling of a highly questionable kind on the *Share* market or otherwise, to a suburban or country villa with Turkey carpets, a wine-cellar and a carriage and pair; as no man now-a-days is ever content with making a decent and honest *livelihood*. Truly a very 'high calling!' Our old Cathedral, thank God, was not built by contract or stock-jobbing: there was, surely, a higher calling of some sort in those quiet, old, unhurrying days. Our local plutocratic friends put their hands into their pockets to the extent of £150,000 to help to build our new University buildings after a design by G. Gilbert Scott, which has turned out a very imposing pile of masonry; at least, it is placed on an imposing and magnificent site. I am no prophet, but I should not wonder if old St. Mungo's Cathedral, erected nearly six hundred years ago to the honour and glory of God, will be standing a noble ruin when our new spick-and-span College is a total wreck after all. Such being the difference between the work of really earnest God-fearing men, and that done by contract and Trades' Unions. The Steam Engine, one of the demons of our mad, restless, headlong civilization, is screaming its unearthly whistle in the very quadrangles of the now deserted, but still venerable College buildings

in our High Street, almost on the very spot where the philosophic Professors of that day, to their eternal honour, gave a harbourage to James Watt, when the narrow-minded guild-brethren of Glasgow expelled him from their town as a stranger craftsman hailing from Greenock. Such is the irony of events! Excuse the presumption of this rather rambling letter, and apologizing for addressing you at such length,

"I am, very faithfully yours."

I have only time, just now, to remark on this letter first, that I don't believe any of Mr. Scott's work is badly done, or will come down soon; and that Trades' Unions are quite right when honest and kind: but the frantic mistake of the Glaswegians, in thinking that they can import learning into their town safely in a Gothic case, and have 180,000 pounds' worth of it at command, while they have banished for ever from their eyes the sight of all that mankind have to learn anything *about*, is,—Well—as the rest of our enlightened public opinion. They might as well put a pyx into a pigsty, to make the pigs pious.

In the second place, as to my correspondent's wish to read my books, I am entirely pleased by it; but, putting the question of fee aside for the nonce, I am not in the least minded, as matters stand, to prescribe my books for him. Nay, so far as in me lies, he shall neither read them, nor learn to trust in any such poor qualifications and

partial comforts of the entirely wrong and dreadful condition of life he is in, with millions of others. If a child in a muddy ditch asked me for a picture-book, I should not give it him; but say, "Come out of that first; or, if you cannot, I must go and get help; but picture-books, there, you shall have none!"

Only a day and a half in the week on which one can get a walk in the country, (and how few have as much, or anything like it!) just bread enough earned to keep one alive, on those terms—one's daily work asking not so much as a lucifer match's worth of human intelligence;—unwholesome besides—one's chest, shoulders, and stomach getting hourly more useless. Smoke above for sky, mud beneath for water; and the pleasant consciousness of spending one's weary life in the pure service of the devil! And the blacks are emancipated over the water there—and this is what you call "having your own way," *here*, is it?

Very solemnly, my good clerk-friend, there is something to be *done* in this matter; not merely to be read. Do you know any honest men who have a will of their own, among your neighbours? If none, set yourself to seek for such; if any, commune with them on this one subject, how a man may have sight of the Earth he was made of, and his bread out of the dust of it—and peace! And find out what it is that hinders you now from having these, and resolve that you will fight it, and put end to it. If you cannot find out for yourselves,

tell me your difficulties, briefly, and I will deal with them for you, as the Second Fors may teach me. Bring you the First with you, and the Third will help us.

And believe me, faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

ROBERT, COUNT OF FLANDERS, CALLED "THE SON OF ST. GEORGE."

*Thus drawn by* JOHN BAPTIST VRINTS, *of* ANTWERP.

## LETTER XVII

*THE SWORD OF ST. GEORGE*

FLORENCE,
*1st May*, 1872.

MY FRIENDS,—

HAVE you thought, as I prayed you to think, during the days of April, what things they are that will hinder you from being happy on this first of May? Be assured of it, you are meant, to-day, to be as happy as the birds, at least. If you are not, you, or somebody else, or something that you are one or other responsible for, is wrong; and your first business is to set yourself, them, or it, to rights. Of late you have made that your last business; you have thought things would right themselves, or that it was God's business to right them, not yours. Peremptorily it is yours. Not, observe, to get your rights, but to put things to rights. Some eleven in the dozen of the population of the world are occupied earnestly in putting things to wrongs, thinking to benefit themselves thereby. Is it any wonder, then, you are uncomfortable, when already the world, in our part of it, is over-populated, and eleven in the dozen of the over-population doing diligently wrong; and the remaining dozenth expecting God

to do their work for them; and consoling themselves with buying two-shilling publications for eighteenpence?

To put things to rights! Do you not know how refreshing it is, even to put one's room to rights, when it has got dusty and decomposed? If no other happiness is to be had, the mere war with decomposition is a kind of happiness. But the war with the Lord of Decomposition, the old Dragon himself,—St. George's war, with a princess to save, and win—are none of you, my poor friends, proud enough to hope for any part in that battle? Do you conceive no figure of any princess for May Queen; or is the definite dragon turned into indefinite cuttlefish, vomiting black venom into the waters of your life; or has he multiplied himself into a host of pulicarious dragons—bug-dragons, insatiable as unclean,—whose food you are, daily?

St. George's war! Here, since last May, when I engraved Giotto's Hope for you, have I been asking whether any one would volunteer for such battle? Not one human creature, except a personal friend or two, for mere love of me, has answered.

Now, it is true, that my writing may be obscure, or seem only half in earnest. But it is the best I can do: it expresses the thoughts that come to me as they come; and I have no time just now to put them into more intelligible words. And, whether you believe them or not, they are entirely faithful words: I have no interest at all to serve by writing, but yours.

And, literally, no one answers. Nay, even those who read, read so carelessly that they don't notice whether the book is to go on or not.

Heaven knows: but it shall, if I am able, and what I undertook last May, be fulfilled, so far as the poor faculty or time left me may serve.

Read over, now, the end of that letter for May last, from "To talk at a distance."

I have given you the tenth of all I have, as I promised. I cannot, because of those lawyers I was talking of last month, get it given you in a permanent and accumulative form; besides that, among the various blockheadisms and rascalities of the day, the perversion of old endowments from their appointed purposes being now practised with applause, gives one little encouragement to think of the future. However, the seven thousand pounds are given, and wholly now out of my own power; and, as I said, only two or three friends, for love of me, and one for true love of justice also, have, in the course of the year, joined with me.

However, this is partly my own fault, for not saying more clearly what I want; and for expecting people to be moved by writing, instead of by personal effort. The more I see of writing the less I care for it; one may do more with a man by getting ten words spoken with him face to face, than by the black lettering of a whole life's thought.

In parenthesis, just read this little bit of Plato; and take it to heart. If the last sentence of it does

not fit some people I know of, there is no prophecy on lip of man.

Socrates is speaking. "I have heard indeed—but no one can say now if it is true or not—that near Naucratis, in Egypt, there was born one of the old gods, the one to whom the bird is sacred which they call the ibis; and this god or demigod's name was Theuth." Second parenthesis—(Theuth, or Thoth: he always has the head of an ibis with a beautiful long bill, in Egyptian sculpture; and you may see him at the British Museum on stone and papyrus infinite,—especially attending at judgments after death, when people's sins are to be weighed in scales; for he is the Egyptian account-keeper, and adds up, and takes note of, things, as you will hear presently from Plato. He became the god of merchants, and a rogue, among the Romans, and is one now among us). "And this demigod found out first, they say, arithmetic, and logic, and geometry, and astronomy, and gambling, and the art of writing.

"And there was then a king over all Egypt, in the great city which the Greeks called Thebes. And Theuth, going to Thebes, showed the king all the arts he had invented, and said they should be taught to the Egyptians. But the king said:—'What was the good of them?' And Theuth telling him, at length, of each, the king blamed some things, and praised others. But when they came to writing: 'Now, *this* piece of learning, O king,' says Theuth, 'will make the Egyptians more wise and more

remembering; for this is physic for the memory, and for wisdom.' But the king answered:—'O most artful Theuth, it is one sort of person's business to invent arts, and quite another sort of person's business to know what mischief or good is in them. And you, the father of letters, are yet so simple-minded that you fancy their power just the contrary of what it really is: for this art of writing will bring forgetfulness into the souls of those who learn it, because, trusting to the external power of the scripture, and stamp* of other men's minds, and not themselves putting themselves in mind, within themselves, it is not medicine of divine memory, but a drug of memorandum, that you have discovered, and you will only give the reputation and semblance of wisdom, not the truth of wisdom, to the learners: for,'" (now *do* listen to this, you cheap education-mongers), "'for becoming hearers of many things, yet without instruction, they will seem to have manifold opinions, but be in truth without any opinions; and the most of them incapable of living together in any good understanding; having become seeming-wise, instead of wise.'"

So much for cheap literature: not that I like cheap talk better, mind you; but I wish I could get a word or two with a few honest people, now, face to face. For I have called the fund I have established The St. George's Fund, because I hope to find, here and there, some one who will join in

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* "Type," the actual word in the Greek.

a White Company, like Sir John Hawkwood's, to be called the Company of St. George; which shall have for its end the wise creating and bestowing, instead of the wise stealing, of money. Now it literally happened that before the White Company went into Italy, there was an Italian Company called 'of St. George,' which was afterwards incorporated with Sir John's of the burnished armour; and another company, called 'of the Rose,' which was a very wicked and destructive one. And within my St. George's Company,—which shall be of persons still following their own business, wherever they are, but who will give the tenth of what they have, or make, for the purchase of land in England, to be cultivated by hand, as aforesaid, in my last May number,—shall be another company, not destructive, called of "Monte Rosa," or "Mont Rose," because Monte Rosa is the central mountain of the range between north and south Europe, which keeps the gift of the rain of heaven. And the motto, or watchword of this company is to be the old French "Mont-joie." And they are to be entirely devoted, according to their power, first to the manual labour of cultivating pure land, and guiding of pure streams and rain to the places where they are needed: and secondly, together with this manual labour, and much by its means, they are to carry on the thoughtful labour of true education, in themselves, and of others. And they are not to be monks nor nuns; but are to learn, and teach all fair arts, and sweet order and obedience of life; and to educate the

children entrusted to their schools in such practical arts and patient obedience; but not at all, necessarily, in either arithmetic, writing, or reading.

That is my design, romantic enough, and at this day difficult enough: yet not so romantic, nor so difficult as your now widely and openly proclaimed design, of making the words "obedience" and "loyalty" to cease from the English tongue.

That same number of the *Republican* which announced that all property must be taken under control, was graced by a frontispiece, representing, figuratively, "Royalty in extremis;" the joyful end of Rule, and of every strength of Kingship; Britannia, having, perhaps, found her waves of late unruly, declaring there shall be no rule over the land neither. Some day I may let you compare this piece of figurative English art with Giotto's; but, meantime, since, before you look so fondly for the end of Royalty, it is well that you should know somewhat of its beginnings, I have given you a picture of one of the companions in the St. George's Company of all time, out of a pretty book, published at Antwerp, by John Baptist Vrints, cutter of figures in copper, on the 16th April, 1598; and giving briefly the stories, and, in no unworthy imagination, the pictures also, of the first 'foresters' (rulers of woods and waves*) in Flanders, where the waves

* "Davantage, ilz se nommoyent Forestiers, non que leur charge et gouvernement fust seulement sur la terre, qui estoit lors occupee et empeschee de la forest Charbonniere, mais la garde de la mer leur estoit aussi commise. Convient ici entendre, que ce terme,

once needed, and received, much ruling; and of the Counts of Flanders who succeeded them, of whom this one, Robert, surnamed "of Jerusalem," was the eleventh, and began to reign in 1077, being "a virtuous, prudent, and brave prince," who, having first taken good order in his money affairs, and ended some unjust claims his predecessors had made on church property; and established a perpetual chancellorship, and legal superintendence over his methods of revenue; took the cross against the infidels, and got the name, in Syria, for his prowess, of the "Son of St. George."

So he stands, leaning on his long sword—a man desirous of setting the world to rights, if it might be; but not knowing the way of it, nor recognizing that the steel with which it can be done, must take another shape than that double-edged one.

And from the eleventh century to this dull nineteenth, less and less the rulers of men have known their weapon. So far, yet, are we from beating sword into ploughshare, that now the sword is set to undo the plough's work when it has been done; and at this hour the ghastliest ruin of all that moulder from the fire, pierced through black rents by the unnatural sunlight above the ashamed streets of Paris, is the long,

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forest, en vieil bas Aleman, convenoit aussi bien aux eaux comme aux boys, ainsi qu'il est narré es memoires de Jean du Tillet."—'Les Genealogies des Forestiers et Comtes de Flandres,' Antw. 1598.

skeleton, and roofless hollow of the "Grenier d'Abondance."

Such Agriculture have we contrived here, in Europe, and ploughing of new furrows for graves. Will you hear how Agriculture is now contrived in America?—where, since you spend your time here in burning corn, you must send to buy it; trusting, however, still to your serviceable friend the Fire, as here to consume, so there, to sow and reap, for repairing of consumption. I have just received a letter from California, which I trust the writer will not blame me for printing:—

"SIR, "*March 1st*, 1872.

"You have so strongly urged 'agriculture by the hand' that it may be of some interest to you to know the result thus far of agriculture by machinery, in California. I am the more willing to address you on this subject from the fact that I may have to do with a new Colony in this State, which will, I trust, adopt, as far as practicable, your ideas as to agriculture by the hand. Such thoughts as you might choose to give regarding the conduct of such a Colony here would be particularly acceptable; and should you deem it expedient to comply with this earnest and sincere request, the following facts may be of service to you in forming just conclusions.

"We have a genial climate and a productive soil. Our farms ('ranches') frequently embrace many thousands of acres, while the rule is, scarcely ever less than hundreds of acres. Wheat-fields of 5,000

acres are by no means uncommon, and not a few of above 40,000 acres are known. To cultivate these extensive tracts much machinery is used, such as steam-ploughs, gang-ploughs, reaping, mowing, sowing, and thrashing machines; and seemingly to the utter extermination of the spirit of home, and rural life. Gangs of labourers are hired during the emergency of harvesting; and they are left for the most part unhoused, and are also fed more like animals than men. Harvesting over, they are discharged, and thus are left near the beginning of our long and rainy winters to shift for themselves. Consequently the larger towns and cities are infested for months with idle men and boys. Housebreaking and highway robbery are of almost daily occurrence. As to the farmers themselves, they live in a dreamy, comfortless way, and are mostly without education or refinement. To show them how to live better and cleaner; to give them nobler aims than merely to raise wheat for the English market; to teach them the history of those five cities, and 'their girls to cook exquisitely,' etc., is surely a mission for earnest men in this country, no less than in England, to say nothing of the various accomplishments to which you have alluded. I have caused to be published in some of our farming districts many of the more important of your thoughts bearing on these subjects, and I trust with beneficial results.

"I trust I shall not intrude on Mr. Ruskin's patience if I now say something by way of thankfulness for what I have received from your

works.* I know not certainly if this will ever reach you. If it does, it may in some small way gladden you to know that I owe to your teaching almost all the good I have thus attained. A large portion of my life has been spent at sea, and in roaming in Mexico, Central and South America, and in the Malaysian and Polynesian Islands. I have been a sailor before and abaft the mast. Years ago I found on a remote island of the Pacific the 'Modern Painters'; after them the 'Seven Lamps of Architecture'; and finally your complete works. Ignorant and uncultivated, I began earnestly to follow certain of your teachings. I read most of the books you recommended, simply because you seemed to be my teacher; and so in the course of these years I have come to believe in you about as faithfully as one man ever believes in another. From having no fixed object in life I have finally found that I have something to do, and will ultimately, I trust, have something to say about sea-life, something that has not, I think, hitherto been said—if God ever permits me the necessary leisure from hard railway work, the most hopeless and depressing of all work I have hitherto done.

"Your most thankful servant,

———."

* I accept the blame of vanity in printing the end of this letter, for the sake of showing more perfectly the temper of its writer, whom I have answered privately; in case my letter may not reach him, I should be grateful if he would send me again his address.

With the account given in the first part of this letter of the results of mechanical agriculture in California, you shall now compare a little sketch by Marmontel of the peasant life, not mechanical, in his own province. It is given, altering only the name of the river, in the "Contes Moraux," in the story, professing to continue that of Molière's 'Misanthrope':

"Alceste, discontented as you know, both with his mistress and with his judges, decided upon flying from men, and retired very far from Paris to the banks of the Vologne; this river, in which the shells enclose pearl, is yet more precious by the fertility which it causes to spring on its borders; the valley that it waters is one beautiful meadow. On one side of it rise smiling hills, scattered all over with woods and villages, on the other extends a vast level of fields covered with corn. It was there that Alceste went to live, forgotten by all, free from cares, and from irksome duties; entirely his own, and finally delivered from the odious spectacle of the world, he breathed freely, and praised heaven for having broken all his chains. A little study, much exercise, pleasures not vivid, but untroubled; in a word, a life peacefully active, preserved him from the ennui of solitude: he desired nothing, and regretted nothing. One of the pleasures of his retreat was to see the cultivated and fertile ground all about him nourishing a peasantry, which appeared to him happy. For a misanthrope who has become

so by his virtue, only thinks that he hates men, because he loves them. Alceste felt a strange softening of the heart mingled with joy at the sight of his fellow-creatures rich by the labour of their hand. 'Those people,' said he, 'are very happy to be still half savage. They would soon be corrupted if they were more civilized.' As he was walking in the country, he chanced upon a labourer who was ploughing, and singing as he ploughed. 'God have a care of you, my good man!' said he; 'you are very gay?' 'I mostly am,' replied the peasant. 'I am happy to hear it: that proves that you are content with your condition.' 'Until now, I have good cause to be.' 'Are you married?' 'Yes, thank heaven.' 'Have you any children?' 'I *had* five. I have lost one, but that is a mischief that may be mended.' 'Is your wife young?' 'She is twenty-five years old.' 'Is she pretty?' 'She is, for me, but she is better than pretty, she is good.' 'And you love her?' '*If* I love her! Who would not love her! I wonder?' 'And she loves you also, without doubt.' 'Oh! for that matter, with all her heart—just the same as before marriage.' 'Then you loved each other before marriage?' 'Without that, should we have let ourselves be caught?' 'And your children—are they healthy?' 'Ah! it's a pleasure to see them! The eldest is only five years old, and he's already a great deal cleverer than his father, and for my two girls, never was anything so charming! It'll be ill-luck indeed if *they* don't get husbands. The youngest is sucking

yet, but the little fellow will be stout and strong. Would you believe it?—he beats his sisters when they want to kiss their mother!—he's always afraid of anybody's taking him from the breast.' 'All that is, then, very happy?' 'Happy! I should think so —you should see the joy there is when I come back from my work! You would say they hadn't seen me for a year. I don't know which to attend to first. My wife is round my neck—my girls in my arms—my boy gets hold of my legs—little Jeannot is like to roll himself off the bed to get to me—and I, I laugh, and cry, and kiss all at once—for all that makes me cry!' 'I believe it, indeed,' said Alceste. 'You *know* it, sir, I suppose, for you are doubtless a father?' 'I have not that happiness.' 'So much the worse for you! There's nothing in the world worth having, but that.' 'And how do you live?' 'Very well: we have excellent bread, good milk, and the fruit of our orchard. My wife, with a little bacon, makes a cabbage soup that the King would be glad to eat! Then we have eggs from the poultry-yard; and on Sunday we have a feast, and drink a little cup of wine.' 'Yes, but when the year is bad?' 'Well, one expects the year to be bad, sometimes, and one lives on what one has saved from the good years.' 'Then there's the rigour of the weather—the cold and the rain, and the heat—that you have to bear.' 'Well! one gets used to it; and if you only knew the pleasure that one has in the evening, in getting the cool breeze after a day of summer; or, in winter, warming

one's hands at the blaze or a good faggot, between one's wife and children: and then one sups with good appetite, and one goes to bed; and think you, that one remembers the bad weather? Sometimes my wife says to me,—"My good man, do you hear the wind and the storm? Ah, suppose you were in the fields?" "But I'm *not* in the fields, I'm here," I say to her. Ah, sir! there are many people in the fine world, who don't live as content as we.' 'Well! but the taxes?' 'We pay them merrily—and well we should—all the country can't be noble, our squires and judges can't come to work in the fields with us—they do for us what we can't—we do for them what they can't—and every business, as one says, has its pains.' 'What equity!' said the misanthrope; 'there, in two words, is all the economy of primitive society. Ah, Nature! there is nothing just but thee! and the healthiest reason is in thy untaught simplicity. But, in paying the taxes so willingly, don't you run some risk of getting more put on you?' 'We used to be afraid of that; but, thank God, the lord of the place has relieved us from this anxiety. He plays the part of our good king to us. He imposes and receives himself, and, in case of need, makes advances for us. He is as careful of us as if we were his own children.' 'And who is this gallant man?' 'The Viscount Laval—he is known enough, all the country respects him.' 'Does he live in his château?' 'He passes eight months of the year there.' 'And the rest?' 'At Paris, I believe.' 'Does he see any

company?' 'The townspeople of Bruyeres, and now and then, some of our old men go to taste his soup and chat with him.' 'And from Paris does he bring nobody?' 'Nobody but his daughter.' 'He is much in the right. And how does he employ himself?' 'In judging between us—in making up our quarrels—in marrying our children—in maintaining peace in our families—in helping them when the times are bad.' 'You must take me to see his village,' said Alceste, 'that must be interesting.'

"He was surprised to find the roads, even the cross-roads, bordered with hedges, and kept with care; but, coming on a party of men occupied in mending them, 'Ah!' he said, 'so you've got forced labour here?' 'Forced?' answered an old man who presided over the work. 'We know nothing of that here, sir; all these men are paid, we constrain nobody; only, if there comes to the village a vagrant, or a do-nothing, they send him to me, and if he wants bread he can gain it; or, he must go to seek it elsewhere.' 'And who has established this happy police?' 'Our good lord—our father—the father to all of us.' 'And where do the funds come from?' 'From the commonalty; and, as it imposes the tax on itself, it does not happen here, as too often elsewhere, that the rich are exempted at the expense of the poor.'

"The esteem of Alceste increased every moment for the wise and benevolent master who governed all this little country. 'How powerful would a king

be!' he said to himself—'and how happy a state! if all the great proprietors followed the example of this one; but Paris absorbs both property and men, it robs all, and swallows up everything.'

"The first glance at the village showed him the image of confidence and comfort. He entered a building which had the appearance of a public edifice, and found there a crowd of children, women, and old men occupied in useful labour;—idleness was only permitted to the extremely feeble. Childhood, almost at its first steps out of the cradle, caught the habit and the taste for work; and old age, at the borders of the tomb, still exercised its trembling hands; the season in which the earth rests brought every vigorous arm to the workshops —and then the lathe, the saw, and the hatchet gave new value to products of nature.

"'I am not surprised,' said Alceste, 'that this people is pure from vice, and relieved from discontent. It is laborious, and occupied without ceasing.' He asked how the workshop had been established. 'Our good lord,' was the reply, 'advanced the first funds for it. It was a very little place at first, and all that was done was at his expense, at his risk, and to his profit; but, once convinced that there was solid advantage to be gained, he yielded the enterprise to us, and now interferes only to protect; and every year he gives to the village the instruments of some one of our arts. It is the present that he makes at the first wedding which is celebrated in the year.'"

Thus wrote, and taught, a Frenchman of the old school, before the Revolution. But worldly-wise Paris went on her own way absorbing property and men; and has attained, this first of May, what means and manner of festival you see in her Grenier d'Abondance.

Glance back now to my proposal for the keeping of the first of May, in the letter on "Rose Gardens" in *Time and Tide*, and discern which state is best for you—modern "civilization," or Marmontel's rusticity, and mine.

Ever faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

## LETTER XVIII

*VAL DI NIÉVOLE*

MY FRIENDS,— PISA, *29th April*, 1872.

YOU would pity me, if you knew how seldom I see a newspaper, just now; but I chanced on one yesterday, and found that all the world was astir about the marriage of the Marquis of B.; and that the Pope had sent him, on that occasion, a telegraphic blessing of superfine quality.

I wonder what the Marquis of B. has done to deserve to be blessed to that special extent, and whether a little mild beatitude, sent here to Pisa, might not have been better spent? For, indeed, before getting hold of the papers, I had been greatly troubled, while drawing the east end of the Duomo, by three fellows who were leaning against the Leaning Tower, and expectorating loudly and copiously, at intervals of half a minute each, over the white marble base of it, which they evidently conceived to have been constructed only to be spit upon. They were all in rags, and obviously proposed to remain in rags all their days, and pass what leisure of life they could obtain, in spitting. There was a boy with them, in rags also, and not

less expectorant; but having some remains of human activity in him still, being not more than twelve years old; and he was even a little interested in my brushes and colours, but rewarded himself, after the effort of some attention to these, by revolving slowly round the iron railing in front of me like a pensive squirrel. This operation at last disturbed me so much, that I asked him if there were no other railings in Pisa he could turn upside down over, but these? "Sono cascato, Signor—" "I tumbled over them, please, Sir," said he, apologetically, with infinite satisfaction in his black eyes.

Now it seemed to me that these three moist-throated men and the squirrelline boy stood much more in need of a paternal blessing than the Marquis of B.—a blessing, of course, with as much of the bloom off it as would make it consistent with the position in which Providence had placed them; but enough, in its moderate way, to bring the good out of them instead of the evil. For there was all manner of good in them, deep and pure—yet for ever to be dormant; and all manner of evil, shallow and superficial, yet for ever to be active and practical, as matters stood that day, under the Leaning Tower.

*Lucca, 7th May.*—Eight days gone, and I've been working hard, and looking my carefullest; and seem to have done nothing, nor begun to see these places, though I've known them thirty years, and

though Mr. Murray's Guide says one may see Lucca, and its Ducal Palace and Piazza, the Cathedral, the Baptistery, nine churches, and the Roman amphitheatre, and take a drive round the ramparts, in the time between the stopping of one train and the starting of the next.

I wonder how much time Mr. Murray would allow for the view I had to-day, from the tower of the Cathedral, up the valley called of "Niévole,"—now one tufted softness of fresh springing leaves, far as the eye can reach. You know something of the produce of the hills that bound it, and perhaps of its own: at least, one used to see "Fine Lucca Oil" often enough in the grocers' windows (petroleum has, I suppose, now taken its place), and the staple of Spitalfields was, I believe, first woven with Lucca thread.

The actual manner of production of these good things is thus:—The Val di Niévole is some five miles wide by thirty long, and is simply one field of corn or rich grass land, undivided by hedges; the corn two feet high, and more, to-day. Quite Lord Derby's style of agriculture, you think? No; not quite. Undivided by hedges, the fields are yet meshed across and across by an intricate network of posts and chains. The posts are maple-trees, and the chains, garlands of vine. The meshes of this net each enclose two or three acres of the corn-land, with a row of mulberry-trees up the middle of it, for silk. There are poppies, and bright ones too, about the banks and roadsides;

but the corn of Val di Niévole is too proud to grow with poppies, and is set with wild gladiolus instead, deep violet. Here and there a mound of crag rises out of the fields, crested with stone-pine, and studded all over with the large stars of the white rock-cistus. Quiet streams, filled with close crowds of the golden waterflag, wind beside meadows painted with purple orchis. On each side of the great plain is a wilderness of hills, veiled at their feet with a grey cloud of olive woods; above, sweet with glades of chestnut; peaks of more distant blue, still, to-day, embroidered with snow, are rather to be thought of as vast precious stones than mountains, for all the state of the world's palaces has been hewn out of their marble.

I was looking over all this from under the rim of a large bell, beautifully embossed, with a St. Sebastian upon it, and some lovely thin-edged laurel leaves, and an inscription saying that the people should be filled with the fat of the land, if they listened to the voice of the Lord. The bell-founder of course meant, by the voice of the Lord, the sound of his own bell; and all over the plain, one could see towers rising above the vines voiced in the same manner. Also much trumpeting and fiddling goes on below, to help the bells, on holy days; and, assuredly, here is fat enough of land to be filled with, if listening to these scrapings and tinklings were indeed the way to be filled.

The laurel leaves on the bell were so finely hammered that I felt bound to have a ladder set

against the lip of it, that I might examine them more closely; and the sacristan and bell-ringer were so interested in this proceeding that they got up, themselves, on the cross-beams, and sat like two jackdaws, looking on, one on each side; for which expression of sympathy I was deeply grateful, and offered the bell-ringer, on the spot, two bank-notes for tenpence each. But they were so rotten with age, and so brittle and black with tobacco, that, having unadvisedly folded them up small in my purse, the patches on their backs had run their corners through them, and they came out tattered like so much tinder. The bell-ringer looked at them hopelessly, and gave me them back. I promised him some better patched ones, and folded the remnants of tinder up carefully, to be kept at Coniston, (where we have still a tenpence-worth or so of copper,—though no olive oil)—for specimens of the currency of the new Kingdom of Italy.

Such are the monuments of financial art, attained by a nation which has lived in the fattest of lands for at least three thousand years, and for the last twelve hundred of them has had at least some measure of Christian benediction, with help from bell, book, candle, and, recently, even from gas.

Yet you must not despise the benediction, though it has not provided them with clean bank-notes. The peasant race, at least, of the Val di Niévole are not unblest; if honesty, kindness, food sufficient for them, and peace of heart, can anywise make up for poverty in current coin. Only the evening

before last, I was up among the hills to the south of Lucca, close to the remains of the country-house of Castruccio Castracani, who was Lord of the Val di Niévole, and much good land besides, in the year 1328; (and whose sword, you perhaps remember, was presented to the King of Sardinia, now King of Italy, when first he visited the Lucchese after driving out the old Duke of Tuscany; and Mrs. Browning wrote a poem upon the presentation;) a Neapolitan Duchess has got his country-house now, and has restored it to her taste. Well, I was up among the hills, that way, in places where no English, nor Neapolitans either, ever dream of going, being altogether lovely and at rest, and the country life in them unchanged; and I had several friends with me, and among them one of the young girls who were at Furness Abbey last year, and, scrambling about among the vines, she lost a pretty little cross of Florentine work. Luckily, she had made acquaintance, only the day before, with the peasant mistress of a cottage close by, and with her two youngest children, Adam and Eve. Eve was still tied up tight in swaddling clothes, down to the toes, and carried about as a bundle; but Adam was old enough to run about; and found the cross, and his mother gave it us back next day.

Not unblest, such a people, though with some common human care and kindness you might bless them a little more. If only you would not curse them; but the curse of your modern life is fatally near, and only for a few years more, perhaps, they

will be seen—driving their tawny kine, or with their sheep following them,—to pass, like pictures in enchanted motion, among their glades of vine.

*Rome, 12th May.*—I am writing at the window of a new inn, whence I have a view of a large green gas-lamp, and of a pond, in rustic rock-work, with four large black ducks in it; also of the top of the Pantheon; sundry ruined walls; tiled roofs innumerable; and a palace about a quarter of a mile long, and the height, as near as I can guess, of Folkestone cliffs under the New Parade; all which I see to advantage over a balustrade veneered with an inch of marble over four inches of cheap stone, carried by balusters of cast iron, painted and sanded, but with the rust coming through,—this being the proper modern recipe in Italy for balustrades which may meet the increasing demand of travellers for splendour of abode. (By the way, I see I can get a pretty little long vignette view of the roof of the Pantheon, and some neighbouring churches, through a chink between the veneering and the freestone.)

Standing in this balcony, I am within three hundred yards of the greater Church of St. Mary, from which Castruccio Castracani walked to St. Peter's on 17th January, 1328, carrying the sword of the German Empire, with which he was appointed to gird its Emperor, on his taking possession of Rome, by Castruccio's help, in spite of the Pope. The Lord of the Val di Niévole wore a dress of superb

damask silk, doubtless the best that the worms of Lucca mulberry-trees could spin; and across his breast an embroidered scroll, inscribed, "He is what God made him," and across his shoulders, behind, another scroll, inscribed, "And he shall be what God will make."

On the 3rd of August, that same year, he recovered Pistoja from the Florentines, and rode home to his own Lucca in triumph, being then the greatest war-captain in Europe, and Lord of Pisa, Pistoja, Lucca, half the coast of Genoa, and three hundred fortified castles in the Apennines; on the third of September he lay dead in Lucca, of fever. "Crushed before the moth;" as the silkworms also, who were boiled before even they became so much as moths, to make his embroidered coat for him. And, humanly speaking, because he had worked too hard in the trenches of Pistoja, in the dog-days, with his armour on, and with his own hands on the mattock, like the good knight he was.

Nevertheless, his sword was no gift for the King of Italy, if the Lucchese had thought better of it. For those three hundred castles of his were all Robber-castles, and he, in fact, only the chief captain of the three hundred thieves who lived in them. In the beginning of his career these "towers of the Lunigiana belonged to gentlemen who had made brigandage in the mountains, or piracy on the sea, the sole occupation of their youth. Castruccio united them round him, and called to his little court all the exiles and adventurers who were

wandering from town to town, in search of war or pleasures." *

And, indeed, to Professors of Art, the Apennine between Lucca and Pistoja is singularly delightful to this day, because of the ruins of these robber-castles on every mound, and of the pretty monasteries and arcades of cloister beside them. But how little we usually estimate the real relation of these picturesque objects! The homes of Baron and Clerk, side by side, established on the hills. Underneath, in the plain, the peasant driving his oxen. The Baron lives by robbing the peasant, and the Clerk by blessing the Baron.

Blessing and absolving, though the Barons of grandest type could live, and resolutely die, without absolution. Old Straw-Mattress of Evilstone, † at ninety-six, sent his son from beside his death-mattress to attack the castle of the Bishop of Arezzo, thinking the Bishop would be off his guard, news having gone abroad that the grey-haired Knight of Evilstone could sit his horse no more. But, usually, the absolution was felt to be needful towards the end of life; and if one thinks of it, the two kinds of edifices on the hill-tops may be shortly described as those of the Pillager and Pardoner, or Pardonere, Chaucer's word being classical in spelling, and the best general one for the clergy of the two great Evangelical and Papal sects. Only a year or two

* SISMONDI: 'History of Italian Republics,' Vol. III. Chap. ii.
† "Saccone of Pietra-mala."

ago, close to the Crystal Palace, I heard the Rev. Mr. —— announce from his pulpit that there was no thief, nor devourer of widows' houses, nor any manner of sinner, in his congregation that day, who might not leave the church an entirely pardoned and entirely respectable person, if he would only believe what the Rev. Mr. —— was about to announce to him.

Strange, too, how these two great pardoning religions agree in the accompaniment of physical filth. I have never been hindered from drawing street subjects by pure human stench, but in two cities,—Edinburgh and Rome.

There are some things, however, which Edinburgh and London pardon, now-a-days, which Rome would not. Penitent thieves, by all means, but not impenitent; still less impenitent peculators.

Have patience a little, for I must tell you one or two things more about Lucca: they are all connected with the history of Florence, which is to be one of the five cities you are to be able to give account of; and, by the way, remember at once, that her florin in the 14th century was of such pure gold that when in Chaucer's "Pardonere's Tale" Death puts himself into the daintiest dress he can, it is into a heap of "floreines faire and bright." He has chosen another form at Lucca; and when I had folded up my two bits of refuse tinder, I walked into the Cathedral to look at the golden lamp which hangs before the Sacred Face—twenty-four pounds of pure gold in the lamp: Face of wood: the oath

of kings, since William Rufus' days; carved eighteen hundred years ago, if one would believe, and very full of pardon to faithful Lucchese; yet, to some, helpless.

There are, I suppose, no educated persons in Italy, and few in England, who do not profess to admire Dante; and, perhaps, out of every hundred of these admirers, three or four may have read the bit about Francesca di Rimini, the death of Ugolino, and the description of the Venetian Arsenal. But even of these honestly studious three or four we should rarely find one, who knew why the Venetian Arsenal was described. You shall hear, if you will.

"As, in the Venetian Arsenal, the pitch boils in the winter time, wherewith to caulk their rotten ships . . . . so, not by fire, but divine art, a thick pitch boiled there, beneath, which had plastered itself all up over the banks on either side. But in it I could see nothing, except the bubbles that its boiling raised, which from time to time made it all swell up over its whole surface, and presently fell back again depressed. And as I looked at it fixedly, and wondered, my guide drew me back hastily, saying, 'Look, look!' And when I turned, I saw behind us, a black devil come running along the rocks. Ah, how wild his face! ah, how bitter his action as he came with his wings wide, light upon his feet! On his shoulder he bore a sinner, grasped by both haunches; and when he came to the bridge foot, he cried down into the pit: 'Here's an ancient from Lucca; put him under, that I may fetch more,

for the land is full of such; there, for money, they make "No" into "Yes" quickly.' And he cast him in and turned back,—never mastiff fiercer after his prey. The thrown sinner plunged in the pitch, and curled himself up; but the devils from under the bridge cried out, 'There's no holy face here; here one swims otherwise than in the Serchio.' And they caught him with their hooks and pulled him under, as cooks do the meat in broth; crying, 'People play here hidden; so that they may filch in secret, if they can.'"

Doubtless, you consider all this extremely absurd, and are of opinion that such things are not likely to happen in the next world. Perhaps not; nor is it clear that Dante believed they would; but I should be glad if you would tell me what you think *is* likely to happen there. In the meantime, please to observe Dante's figurative meaning, which is by no means absurd. Every one of his scenes has symbolic purpose, down to the least detail. This lake of pitch is money, which, in our own vulgar English phrase, "sticks to people's fingers;" it clogs and plasters its margin all over, because the mind of a man bent on dishonest gain makes everything within its reach dirty; it bubbles up and down, because underhand gains nearly always involve alternate excitement and depression; and it is haunted by the most cruel and indecent of all the devils, because there is nothing so mean, and nothing so cruel, but a peculator will do it. So you may read every line figuratively, if you choose: all that I want is, that

you should be acquainted with the opinions of Dante concerning peculation. For with the history of the five cities, I wish you to know also the opinions, on all subjects personally interesting to you, of five people who lived in them; namely, of Plato, Virgil, Dante, Victor Carpaccio (whose opinions I must gather for you from his paintings, for painting is the way Venetians write), and Shakespeare.

If, after knowing these five men's opinions on practical matters (these five, as you will find, being all of the same mind), you prefer to hold Mr. J. S. Mill's and Mr. Fawcett's opinions, you are welcome. And indeed I may as well end this by at once examining some of Mr. Fawcett's statements on the subject of Interest, that being one of our chief modern modes of peculation; but before we put aside Dante for to-day, just note farther this, that while he has sharp punishment for thieves, forgers, and peculators,—the thieves being changed into serpents, the forgers covered with leprosy, and the peculators boiled in pitch,—he has no punishment for bad workmen; no Tuscan mind at that day being able to conceive such a ghastly sin as a man's doing bad work wilfully; and, indeed, I think the Tuscan mind, and in some degree the Piedmontese, retain some vestige of this old temper; for though, not a fortnight since (on 3rd May), the cross of marble in the arch-spandril next the east end of the Chapel of the Thorn at Pisa was dashed to pieces before my eyes, as I was drawing it for my class in heraldry at Oxford, by a stone-mason, that his

master might be paid for making a new one, I have no doubt the new one will be as honestly like the old as master and man can make it; and Mr. Murray's Guide will call it a judicious restoration. So also, though here, the new Government is digging through the earliest rampart of Rome (*agger* of Servius Tullius), to build a new Finance Office, which will doubtless issue tenpenny notes in Latin, with the dignity of *denarii* (the "pence" of your New Testament), I have every reason to suppose the new Finance Office will be substantially built, and creditable to its masons; (the veneering and cast-iron work being, I believe, done mostly at the instigation of British building companies). But it seems strange to me that, coming to Rome for quite other reasons, I should be permitted by the Third Fors to see the *agger* of Tullius cut through, for the site of a Finance Office, and his Mons Justitiæ (Mount of Justice), presumably the most venerable piece of earth in Italy, carted away, to make room for a railroad-station of Piccola Velocità. For Servius Tullius was the first king who stamped money with the figures of animals, and introduced a word among the Romans with the sound of which Englishmen are also now acquainted, "pecunia." Moreover, it is in speaking of this very *agger* of Tullius that Livy explains in what reverence the Romans held the space between the outer and inner walls of their cities, which modern Italy delights to turn into a Boulevard.

Now then, for Mr. Fawcett:—

At the 146th page of the edition of his 'Manual' previously quoted, you will find it stated that the interest of money consists of three distinct parts:

1. Reward for abstinence.
2. Compensation for the risk of loss.
3. Wages for the labour of superintendence.

I will reverse this order in examining the statements; for the only real question is as to the first, and we had better at once clear the other two away from it.

3. Wages for the labour of superintendence.

By giving the capitalist wages at all, we put him at once into the class of labourers, which in my November letter I showed you is partly right; but, by Mr. Fawcett's definition, and in the broad results of business, he is not a labourer. So far as he is one, of course, like any other, he is to be paid for his work. There is no question but that the partner who superintends any business should be paid for superintendence; but the question before us is only respecting payment for doing nothing. I have, for instance, at this moment £15,000 of Bank Stock, and receive £1,200 odd, a year, from the Bank, but I have never received the slightest intimation from the directors that they wished for my assistance in the superintendence of that establishment;—(more shame for them.) But even in cases where the partners are active, it does not follow that the one who has most money in the business is either fittest to superintend it, or likely to do so; it is indeed probable that a man who has made money already

will know how to make more; and it is necessary to attach some importance to property as the sign of sense: but your business is to choose and pay your superintendent for his sense, and not for his money. Which is exactly what Mr. Carlyle has been telling you for some time; and both he and all his disciples entirely approve of interest, if you are indeed prepared to define that term as payment for the exercise of common sense spent in the service of the person who pays for it. I reserve yet awhile, however, what is to be said, as hinted in my first letter, about the sale of ideas.

2. Compensation for risk.

Does Mr. Fawcett mean by compensation for risk, protection from it, or reward for running it? Every business involves a certain quantity of risk, which is properly covered by every prudent merchant, but he does not expect to make a profit out of his risks, nor calculate on a percentage on his insurance. If he prefer not to insure, does Professor Fawcett mean that his customers ought to compensate him for his anxiety; and that while the definition of the first part of interest is extra payment for prudence, the definition of the second part of interest is extra payment for *im*prudence? Or, does Professor Fawcett mean, what is indeed often the fact, that interest for money represents such reward for risk as people may get across the green cloth at Homburg or Monaco? Because so far as what used to be business is, in modern political economy, gambling, Professor Fawcett will please to observe

that what one gamester gains another loses. You cannot get anything out of Nature, or from God, by gambling;—only out of your neighbour: and to the quantity of interest of money thus gained, you are mathematically to oppose a precisely equal *dis*-interest of somebody else's money.

These second and third reasons for interest then, assigned by Professor Fawcett, have evidently nothing whatever to do with the question. What I want to know is, why the Bank of England is paying me £1,200 a year. It certainly does not pay me for superintendence. And so far from receiving my dividend as compensation for risk, I put my money into the bank because I thought it exactly the safest place to put it in. But nobody can be more anxious than I to find it proper that I should have £1,200 a year. Finding two of Mr. Fawcett's reasons fail me utterly, I cling with tenacity to the third, and hope the best from it.

The third, or first,—and now too sorrowfully the last—of the Professor's reasons, is this, that my £1,200 are given me as "the reward of abstinence." It strikes me, upon this, that if I had not my £15,000 of Bank Stock I should be a good deal more abstinent than I am, and that nobody would then talk of rewarding me for it. It might be possible to find even cases of very prolonged and painful abstinence, for which no reward has yet been adjudged by less abstinent England. Abstinence may, indeed, have its reward, nevertheless; but not by increase of what we abstain from, unless there be a law of

growth for it, unconnected with our abstinence. "You cannot have your cake and eat it." Of course not; and if you don't eat it, you have your cake; but not a cake and a half! Imagine the complex trial of schoolboy minds, if the law of nature about cakes were, that if you ate none of your cake to-day, you would have ever so much bigger a cake to-morrow!—which is Mr. Fawcett's notion of the law of nature about money; and, alas, many a man's beside,—it being no law of nature whatever, but absolutely contrary to all her laws, and not to be enacted by the whole force of united mankind.

*Not* a cake and a quarter to-morrow, dunce, however abstinent you are—only the cake you have, —if the mice don't get at it in the night.

Interest, then, is not, it appears, payment for labour; it is not reward for risk; it is not reward for abstinence.

What is it?

One of two things it is;—taxation, or usury. Of which in my next letter. Meantime believe me

Faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

## LETTER XIX

### *RAIN ON THE ROCK*

MY FRIENDS,— VERONA, *18th June*, 1872.

WHAT an age of progress it is, by help of advertisements! No wonder you put some faith in them, friends. In summer one's work is necessarily much before breakfast; so, coming home tired to-day, I order a steak, with which is served to me a bottle of "Moutarde Diaphane," from Bordeaux.

What a beautiful arrangement have we here! Fancy the appropriate mixture of manufactures of cold and hot at Bordeaux—claret and diaphanous mustard! Then the quantity of printing and proclamation necessary to make people in Verona understand that diaphanous mustard is desirable, and may be had at Bordeaux. Fancy, then, the packing, and peeping into the packages, and porterages, and percentages on porterages; and the engineering, and the tunnelling, and the bridge-building, and the steam whistling, and the grinding of iron, and raising of dust in the Limousin (Marmontel's country), and in Burgundy, and in Savoy, and under the Mont Cenis, and in Piedmont, and in

Lombardy, and at last over the field of Solferino, to fetch me my bottle of diaphanous mustard!

And to think that, besides paying the railway officers all along the line, and the custom-house officers at the frontier, and the original expenses of advertisement, and the profits of its proprietors, my diaphanous mustard paid a dividend to somebody or other, all the way here! I wonder it is not more diaphanous by this time!

An age of progress, indeed, in which the founding of my poor St. George's Company, growing its own mustard, and desiring no dividends, may well seem difficult. I have scarcely had courage yet to insist on that second particular, but will try to find it, on this Waterloo day.

Observe, then, once for all, it is to be a company for Alms-giving, not for dividend-getting. For I still believe in Alms-giving, though most people now-a-days do not, but think the only hopeful way of serving their neighbour is to make a profit out of him. I am of opinion, on the contrary, that the hopefullest way of serving him is to let him make a profit out of *me*, and I only ask the help of people who are at one with me in that mind.

Alms-giving, therefore, is to be our function; yet alms only of a certain sort. For there are bedesmen and bedesmen, and our charities must be as discriminate as possible.

For instance, those two steely and stalwart horsemen, who sit, by the hour, under the two arches opposite Whitehall, from ten to four per diem, to

receive the public alms. It is their singular and well-bred manner of begging, indeed, to keep their helmets on their heads, and sit erect on horseback; but one may, with slight effort of imagination, conceive the two helmets held in a reversed manner, each in the mouth of a well-bred and politely-behaving dog, Irish greyhound, or the like; sitting erect, it also, paws in air, with the brass instead of copper pan in its mouth, plume downwards, for reception of pence.

"Ready to fight for us, they are, on occasional 18ths of June."

Doubtless, and able-bodied;—barons of truest make: but I thought your idea of discriminate charity was to give rather to the sick than the able-bodied? and that you have no hope of interfering henceforward, except by money payments, in any foreign affairs?

"But the Guards are necessary to keep order in the Park."

Yes, certainly, and farther than the Park. The two breastplated figures, glittering in transfixed attitudes on each side of the authoritative clock, are, indeed, very precious time-piece ornamentation. No watchmaker's window in Paris or Geneva can show the like. Finished little figures, perfect down to the toes of their boots,—the enamelled clasp on the girdle of the British Constitution!—You think the security of that depends on the freedom of your press, and the purity of your elections?

Do but unclasp this piece of dainty jewellery;

send the metal of it to the melting-pot, and see where your British Constitution will be in a few turns of the hands of the faultless clock. They are precious statues, these, good friend; set there to keep you and me from having too much of our own way; and I joyfully and gratefully drop my penny into each helmet as I pass by, though I expect no other dividend from that investment than good order, picturesque effect, and an occasional flourish on the kettle-drum.

Likewise, from their contributed pence, the St. George's Company must be good enough to expect dividend only in good order and picturesque effect of another sort. For my notion of discriminate charity is by no means, like most other people's, the giving to unable-bodied paupers. My alms-people are to be the ablest bodied I can find; the ablest minded I can make; and from ten to four every day will be on duty. Ten to four, nine to three, or perhaps six to twelve;—just the time those two gilded figures sit with their tools idle on their shoulders, (being fortunately without employment,) my ungilded, but not unstately, alms-men shall stand with tools at work, mattock or flail, axe or hammer. And I do not doubt but in little time, they will be able to thresh or hew rations for their day out of the ground, and that our help to them need only be in giving them that to hew them out of. Which, you observe, is just what I ask may be bought for them.

"'May be bought,' but by whom? and for whom,

how distributed, in whom vested?" and much more you have to ask.

As soon as I am sure you understand what needs to be done, I will satisfy you as to the way of doing it.

But I will not let you know my plans, till you acknowledge my principles, which I have no expectation of your doing, yet awhile.

*June 22nd.*

"Bought for *them*"—for whom? How should I know? The best people I can find, or make, as chance may send them: the Third Fors must look to it. Surely it cannot matter much, to you, whom the thing helps, so long as you are quite sure, and quite content, that it won't help *you?*

That last sentence is wonderfully awkward English, not to say ungrammatical; but I must write such English as may come to-day, for there's something wrong with the Post, or the railroads, and I have no revise of what I wrote for you at Florence, a fortnight since; so that must be left for the August Letter, and meanwhile I must write something quickly in its place, or be too late for the first of July. Of the many things I have to say to you, it matters little which comes first; indeed, I rather like the Third Fors to take the order of them into her hands, out of mine.

I repeat my question. It surely cannot matter to you whom the thing helps, so long as you are content that it won't, or can't, help *you?* But are you

content so? For that is the essential condition of the whole business—I will not speak of it in terms of money—are you content to give work? Will you build a bit of wall, suppose—to serve your neighbour, expecting no good of the wall yourself? If so, you must be satisfied to build the wall for the man who wants it built; you must not be resolved first to be sure that he is the best man in the village. Help any one, anyhow you can: so, in order, the greatest possible number will be helped; nay, in the end, perhaps, you may get some shelter from the wind under your charitable wall yourself; but do not expect it, nor lean on any promise that you shall find your bread again, once cast away; I can only say that of what I have chosen to cast fairly on the waters myself, I have never yet, after any number of days, found a crumb. Keep what you want; cast what you can, and expect nothing back, once lost, or once given.

But for the actual detail of the way in which benefit might thus begin, and diffuse itself, here is an instance close at hand. Yesterday a thunder-shower broke over Verona in the early afternoon: and in a quarter of an hour the streets were an inch deep in water over large spaces, and had little rivers at each side of them. All these little rivers ran away into the large river—the Adige, which plunges down under the bridges of Verona, writhing itself in strong rage: for Verona, with its said bridges, is a kind of lock-gate upon the Adige, half open—lock-gate on the ebbing rain of all the South Tyrolese

Alps. The little rivers ran into it, not out of the streets only, but from all the hillsides; millions of sudden streams. If you look at Charles Dickens's letter about the rain in Glencoe, in Mr. Forster's Life of him, it will give you a better idea of the kind of thing than I can, for my forte is really not description, but political economy. Two hours afterwards the sky was clear, the streets dry, the whole thunder-shower was in the Adige, ten miles below Verona, making the best of its way to the sea, after swelling the Po a little (which is inconveniently high already), and I went out with my friends to see the sun set clear, as it was likely to do, and did, over the Tyrolese mountains.

The place fittest for such purpose is a limestone crag about five miles nearer the hills, rising out of the bed of a torrent, which, as usual, I found a bed only; a little washing of the sand into moist masses here and there being the only evidence of the past rain.

Above it, where the rocks were dry, we sat down, to draw, or to look; but I was too tired to draw, and cannot any more look at a sunset with comfort, because, now that I am fifty-three, the sun seems to me to set so horribly fast; when one was young, it took its time; but now it always drops like a shell, and before I can get any image of it, is gone, and another day with it.

So, instead of looking at the sun, I got thinking about the dry bed of the stream, just beneath. Ugly enough it was; cut by occasional inundation irregularly out of the thick masses of old Alpine

shingle, nearly every stone of it the size of an ostrich-egg. And, by the way, the average size of shingle in given localities is worth your thinking about, geologically. All through this Veronese plain the stones are mostly of ostrich-egg size and shape; some forty times as big as the pebbles of English shingle (say of the Addington Hills), and not flat nor round; but resolvedly oval. Now there is no reason, that I know of, why large mountains should break into large pebbles, and small ones into small; and indeed the consistent reduction of our own masses of flint, as big as a cauliflower, leaves and all, into the flattish rounded pebble, seldom wider across than half a crown, of the banks of Addington, is just as strange a piece of systematic reduction as the grinding of Monte Baldo into sculpture of ostrich-eggs:—neither of the processes, observe, depending upon questions of time, but of method of fracture.

The evening drew on, and two peasants who had been cutting hay on a terrace of meadow among the rocks, left their work, and came to look at the sketchers, and make out, if they could, what we wanted on their ground. They did not speak to us, but bright light came into the face of one, evidently the master, on being spoken to, and excuse asked of him for our presence among his rocks, by which he courteously expressed himself as pleased, no less than (though this he did not say) puzzled.

Some talk followed, of cold and heat, and anything else one knew the Italian for, or could understand

the Veronese for (Veronese being more like Spanish than Italian); and I praised the country, as was just, or at least as I could, and said I should like to live there. Whereupon he commended it also, in measured terms; and said the wine was good. "But the water?" I asked, pointing to the dry river-bed. The water was bitter, he said, and little wholesome. "Why, then, have you let all that thunder-shower go down the Adige, three hours ago?" "That was the way the showers came." "Yes, but not the way they ought to go." (We were standing by the side of a cleft in the limestone which ran down through ledge after ledge, from the top of the cliff, mostly barren; but my farmer's man had led two of his grey oxen to make what they could of supper from the tufts of grass on the sides of it, half an hour before.) "If you had ever been at the little pains of throwing half-a-dozen yards of wall here, from rock to rock, you would have had, at this moment, a pool of standing water as big as a mill-pond, kept out of that thunder-shower, which very water, to-morrow morning, will probably be washing away somebody's hay-stack into the Po."

The above was what I wanted to say; but didn't know the Italian for hay-stack. I got enough out to make the farmer understand what I meant.

Yes, he said, that would be very good, but "la spesa?"

"The expense! What would be the expense to you of gathering a few stones from this hillside?

And the idle minutes, gathered out of a week, if a neighbour or two joined in the work, could do all the building." He paused at this — the idea of neighbours joining in work appearing to him entirely abortive, and untenable by a rational being. Which indeed, throughout Christendom, it at present is,—thanks to the beautiful instructions and orthodox catechisms impressed by the two great sects of Evangelical and Papal pardoneres on the minds of their respective flocks—(and on their lips also, early enough in the lives of the little bleating things. "Che cosa è la fede?" I heard impetuously interrogated of a seven years' old one, by a conscientious lady in a black gown and white cap, in St. Michael's at Lucca, and answered in a glib speech a quarter of a minute long). Neither have I ever thought of, far less seriously proposed, such a monstrous thing as that neighbours should help one another; but I have proposed, and do solemnly still propose, that people who have got no neighbours, but are outcasts and Samaritans, as it were, should put whatever twopenny charity they can afford into useful unity of action; and that, caring personally for no one, practically for every one, they should undertake "la spesa" of work that will pay no dividend on their twopences; but will both produce and pour oil and wine where they are most wanted. And I do solemnly propose that the St. George's Company in England, and (please the University of Padua) a St. Anthony's Company in Italy, should positively buy such bits of barren ground as this

farmer's at Verona, and make the most of them that agriculture and engineering can.

VENICE, *23rd June.*

My letter will be a day or two late, I fear, after all; for I can't write this morning, because of the accursed whistling of the dirty steam-engine of the omnibus for Lido, waiting at the quay of the Ducal Palace for the dirty population of Venice, which is now neither fish nor flesh, neither noble nor fisherman;—cannot afford to be rowed, nor has strength nor sense enough to row itself; but smokes and spits up and down the piazzetta all day, and gets itself dragged by a screaming kettle to Lido next morning, to sea-bathe itself into capacity for more tobacco.

Yet I am grateful to the Third Fors for stopping my revise; because just as I was passing by Padua yesterday I chanced upon this fact, which I had forgotten (do me the grace to believe that I knew it twenty years ago), in Antonio Caccianiga's 'Vita Campestre.'* "The Venetian Republic founded in Padua"—(wait a minute; for the pigeons are come to my window-sill and I must give them some breakfast)—"founded in Padua, 1765, the first chair of rural economy appointed in Italy, annexed to it a piece of ground destined for the study, and called Peter Ardouin, a Veronese botanist, to honour the school with his lectures."

Yes; that is all very fine; nevertheless, I am

* Second edition, Milan, 1870. (FRATELLI RECHIADEI), p. 86.

not quite sure that rural economy, during the 1760 years previous, had not done pretty well without a chair, and on its own legs. For, indeed, since the beginning of those philosophies in the eighteenth century, the Venetian aristocracy has so ill prospered that instead of being any more able to give land at Padua, it cannot so much as keep a poor acre of it decent before its own Ducal Palace, in Venice; nor hinder this miserable mob, which has not brains enough to know so much as what o'clock it is, nor sense enough so much as to go aboard a boat without being whistled for like dogs, from choking the sweet sea air with pitch-black smoke, and filling it with entirely devilish noise, which no properly bred human being could endure within a quarter of a mile of them—that so they may be sufficiently assisted and persuaded to embark, for the washing of themselves, at the Palace quay.

It is a strange pass for things to have reached, under politic aristocracies and learned professors; but the policy and learning became useless, through the same kind of mistake on both sides. The professors of botany forgot that botany, in its original Greek, meant a science of things to be eaten; they pursued it only as a science of things to be named. And the politic aristocracy forgot that their own "bestness" consisted essentially in their being fit —in a figurative manner—to be eaten: and fancied rather that their superiority was of a titular character, and that the beauty and power of their order lay wholly in being fit to be—named.

I must go back to my wall-building, however, for a minute or two more, because you might probably think that my answer to the farmer's objection about expense, (even if I had possessed Italian enough to make it intelligible,) would have been an insufficient one; and that the operation of embanking hill sides so as to stay the rain-flow, is a work of enormous cost and difficulty.

Indeed, a work productive of good so infinite as this would be, and contending for rule over the grandest forces of nature, cannot be altogether cheap, nor altogether facile. But spend annually one-tenth of the sum you now give to build embankments against imaginary enemies, in building embankments for the help of people whom you may easily make your real friends,—and see whether your budget does not become more satisfactory, so; and, above all, learn a little hydraulics.

I wasted some good time, a year or two since, over a sensational novel in one of our magazines, which I thought would tell me more of what the public were thinking about strikes than I could learn elsewhere. But it spent itself in dramatic effects with lucifer matches, and I learned nothing from it, and the public mislearned much. It ended, (no, I believe it didn't end,—but I read no farther,) with the bursting of a reservoir, and the floating away of a village. The hero, as far as I recollect, was in the half of a house which was just going to be washed down; and the anti-hero was opposite him, in the half of a tree which was just going to be torn up; and the

heroine was floating between them down the stream, and one wasn't to know, till next month, which would catch her. But the hydraulics were the essentially bad part of the book, for the author made great play with the tremendous weight of water against his embankment;—it never having occurred to him that the gate of a Liverpool dry dock can keep out—and could just as easily for that matter keep in—the Atlantic Ocean, to the necessary depth in feet and inches; the depth giving the pressure, not the superficies.

Nay, you may see, not unfrequently, on Margate sands, your own six-years-old engineers of children keep out the Atlantic Ocean quite successfully, for a little while, from a favourite hole; the difficulty being not at all in keeping the Atlantic well out at the side, but from surreptitiously finding its way in at the bottom. And that is the real difficulty for old engineers; properly the only one; you must not let the Atlantic begin to run surreptitiously either in or out, else it soon becomes difficult to stop; and all reservoirs ought to be wide, not deep, when they are artificial, and should not be immediately above villages (though they might always be made perfectly safe merely by dividing them by walls, so that the contents could not run out all at once). But when reservoirs are *not* artificial, when the natural rocks, with adamantine wall, and embankment built up from the earth's centre, are ready to catch the rain for you, and render it back as pure as their own crystal,—if you will only here and there throw

an iron valve across a cleft,—believe me—if you choose to have a dividend out of Heaven, and sell the Rain, you may get it a good deal more easily and at a figure or two higher per cent. than you can on diaphanous mustard. There are certainly few men of my age who have watched the ways of Alpine torrents so closely as I have, (and you need not think my knowing something of art prevents me from understanding them, for the first good canal-engineer in Italy was Lionardo da Vinci, and more drawings of water-wheels and water-eddies exist of his, by far, than studies of hair and eyes); and the one strong impression I have respecting them is their utter docility and passiveness, if you will educate them young. But our wise engineers invariably try to manage faggots instead of sticks; and, leaving the rivulets of the Viso without training, debate what bridle is to be put in the mouth of the Po! Which, by the way, is a *running* reservoir, considerably above the level of the plain of Lombardy; and if the bank of *that* one should break, any summer's day, there will be news of it, and more cities than Venice with water in their streets.

*June 24th.*

You must be content with a short letter (I wish I could flatter myself you would like a longer one) this month; but you will probably see some news of the weather here, yesterday afternoon, which will give some emphasis to what I have been saying,

not for the first time by any means; and so I leave you to think of it, and remain

Faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

I have received from Wells, in Somersetshire, thirty pounds for the St. George's Fund, the first money sent me by a stranger. For what has been given me by my personal friends I will account to them privately; and, henceforward, will accept no more given in their courteous prejudice, lest other friends, who do not believe in my crotchets, should be made uncomfortable. I am not quite sure if the sender of this money from Somersetshire would like his name to appear in so wide solitude: and therefore content myself with thus thanking him, and formally opening my accounts.

*Part of the* CHAPEL OF ST. MARY OF THE THORN, PISA,

*as it was 27 years ago.*

*Now in Ruins.*

## LETTER XX

*BENEDICTION*

MY FRIENDS,— VENICE, *3rd July*, 1872.

YOU probably thought I had lost my temper, and written inconsiderately, when I called the whistling of the *Lido* steamer 'accursed.'

I never wrote more considerately; using the longer and weaker word 'accursed' instead of the simple and proper one, 'cursed,' to take away, as far as I could, the appearance of unseemly haste; and using the expression itself on set purpose, not merely as the fittest for the occasion, but because I have more to tell you respecting the general benediction engraved on the bell of Lucca, and the particular benediction bestowed on the Marquis of B.; several things more, indeed, of importance for you to know, about blessing and cursing.

Some of you may perhaps remember the saying of St. James about the tongue: "Therewith bless we God, and therewith curse we men; out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."

It is not clear whether St. James means that there should be no cursing at all, (which I suppose he

does,) or merely that the blessing and cursing should not be uttered by the same lips. But his meaning, whatever it was, did not, in the issue, matter; for the Church of Christendom has always ignored this text altogether, and appointed the same persons in authority to deliver, on all needful occasions, benediction or malediction, as either might appear to them due; while our own most learned sect, wielding State power, has not only appointed a formal service of malediction in Lent, but commanded the Psalms of David, in which the blessing and cursing are inlaid as closely as the black and white in a mosaic floor, to be solemnly sung through once a month.

I do not wish, however, to-day to speak to you of the practice of the churches; but of your own, which, observe, is in one respect singularly different. All the churches, of late years, paying less and less attention to the discipline of their people, have felt an increasing compunction in cursing them when they did wrong; while also, the wrong doing, through such neglect of discipline, becoming every day more complex, ecclesiastical authorities perceived that, if delivered with impartiality, the cursing must be so general, and the blessing so defined, as to give their services an entirely unpopular character.

Now, there is a little screw steamer just passing, with no deck, an omnibus cabin, a flag at both ends, and a single passenger; she is not twelve yards long, yet the beating of her screw has been so loud across the lagoon for the last five minutes, that I

thought it must be a large new steamer coming in from the sea, and left my work to go and look.

Before I had finished writing that last sentence, the cry of a boy selling something black out of a basket on the quay became so sharply distinguished above the voices of the always debating gondoliers, that I must needs stop again, and go down to the quay to see what he had got to sell. They were half-rotten figs, shaken down, untimely, by the mid-summer storms: his cry of "Fighiaie" scarcely ceased, being delivered, as I observed, just as clearly between his legs, when he was stooping to find an eatable portion of the black mess to serve a customer with, as when he was standing up. His face brought the tears into my eyes, so open, and sweet, and capable it was; and so sad. I gave him three very small halfpence, but took no figs, to his surprise: he little thought how cheap the sight of him and his basket was to me, at the money; nor what this fruit, "that could not be eaten, it was so evil," sold cheap before the palace of the Dukes of Venice, meant, to any one who could read signs, either in earth, or her heaven and sea.*

Well; the blessing, as I said, not being now often legitimately applicable to particular people by Christian priests, they gradually fell into the habit of giving it of pure grace and courtesy to their congregations; or more especially to poor persons,

* "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."—Rev. vi. 13; compare Jerem. xxiv. 8, and Amos viii. 1 and 2.

instead of money, or to rich ones, in exchange for it,—or generally to any one to whom they wished to be polite: while, on the contrary, the cursing, having now become widely applicable, and even necessary, was left to be understood, but not expressed; and at last, to all practical purpose, abandoned altogether, (the rather that it had become very disputable whether it ever did any one the least mischief); so that, at this time being, the Pope, in his charmingest manner, blesses the bride-cake of the Marquis of B., making, as it were, an ornamental confectionery figure of himself on the top of it; but has not, in anywise, courage to curse the King of Italy, although that penniless monarch has confiscated the revenues of every time-honoured religious institution in Italy; and is about, doubtless, to commission some of the Raphaels in attendance at his court, (though, I believe, grooms are more in request there,) to paint an opposition fresco in the Vatican, representing the Sardinian instead of the Syrian Heliodorus, successfully abstracting the treasures of the temple, and triumphantly putting its angels to flight.

Now the curious difference between your practice, and the Church's, to which I wish to-day to direct your attention, is, that while thus the clergy, in what efforts they make to retain their influence over human mind, use cursing little, and blessing much, you working-men more and more frankly every day adopt the exactly contrary practice of using benediction little, and cursing much: so that,

even in the ordinary course of conversation among yourselves, you very rarely bless, audibly, so much as one of your own children; but not unfrequently damn, audibly, them, yourselves, and your friends.

I wish you to think over the meaning of this habit of yours very carefully with me. I call it a habit of *yours*, observe, only with reference to your recent adoption of it. You have learned it from your superiors; but they, partly in consequence of your too eager imitation of them, are beginning to mend their manners; and it would excite much surprise, nowadays, in any European court, to hear the reigning monarch address the heir-apparent on an occasion of state festivity, as a Venetian ambassador heard our James the First address Prince Charles,—"Devil take you, why don't you dance?" But, strictly speaking, the prevalence of the habit among all classes of laymen is the point in question.

*4th July.*

And first, it is necessary that you should understand accurately the difference between swearing and cursing, vulgarly so often confounded. They are entirely different things: the first is invoking the witness of a Spirit to an assertion you wish to make; the second is invoking the assistance of a Spirit, in a mischief you wish to inflict. When ill-educated and ill-tempered people clamorously confuse the two invocations, they are not, in reality, either cursing or swearing; but merely vomiting

empty words indecently. True swearing and cursing must always be distinct and solemn; here is an old Latin oath, for instance, which, though borrowed from a stronger Greek one, and much diluted, is still grand:

"I take to witness the Earth, and the stars, and the sea; the two lights of heaven; the falling and rising of the year; the dark power of the gods of sorrow; the sacredness of unbending Death; and may the Father of all things hear me, who sanctifies covenants with his lightning. For I lay my hand on the altar, and by the fires thereon, and the gods to whom they burn, I swear that no future day shall break this peace for Italy, nor violate the covenant she has made."

That is old swearing: but the lengthy forms of it appearing partly burdensome to the celerity, and partly superstitious to the wisdom, of modern minds, have been abridged,—in England, for the most part, into the extremely simple "By God;" in France into "Sacred name of God" (often the first word of the sentence only pronounced), and in Italy into "Christ" or "Bacchus;" the superiority of the former Deity being indicated by omitting the preposition before the name. The oaths are "Christ,"—never "by Christ;" and "by Bacchus," —never "Bacchus."

Observe also that swearing is only by extremely ignorant persons supposed to be an infringement of the Third Commandment. It is disobedience to the teaching of Christ; but the Third Commandment

has nothing to do with the matter. People do not take the name of God in vain when they swear; they use it, on the contrary, very earnestly and energetically to attest what they wish to say. But when the Monster Concert at Boston begins, on the English day, with the hymn, "The will of God be done," while the audience know perfectly well that there is not one in a thousand of them who is trying to do it, or who would have it done if he could help it, unless it was his own will too,—*that* is taking the name of God in vain, with a vengeance.

Cursing, on the other hand, is invoking the aid of a Spirit to a harm you wish to see accomplished, but which is too great for your own immediate power: and to-day I wish to point out to you what intensity of faith in the existence and activity of a spiritual world is evinced by the curse which is characteristic of the English tongue.

For, observe, habitual as it has become, there is still so much life and sincerity in the expression, that we all feel our passion partly appeased in its use; and the more serious the occasion, the more practical and effective the cursing becomes. In Mr. Kinglake's "History of the Crimean War," you will find the —th Regiment at Alma is stated to have been materially assisted in maintaining position quite vital to the battle by the steady imprecation delivered at it by its colonel for half an hour on end. No quantity of benediction would have answered the purpose; the colonel might have said, "Bless you, my children," in the tenderest tones, as

often as he pleased,—yet not have helped his men to keep their ground.

I want you therefore, first, to consider how it happens that cursing seems at present the most effectual means for encouraging human work; and whether it may not be conceivable that the work itself is of a kind which any form of effectual blessing would hinder instead of help. Then, secondly, I want you to consider what faith in a spiritual world is involved in the terms of the curse we usually employ. It has two principal forms; one complete and unqualified, "God damn your soul," implying that the soul is there, and that we cannot be satisfied with less than its destruction: the other, qualified, and on the bodily members only; "God damn your eyes and limbs." It is this last form I wish especially to examine.

For how do you suppose that either eye, or ear, or limb, *can* be damned? What is the spiritual mischief you invoke? Not merely the blinding of the eye, nor palsy of the limb; but the condemnation or judgment of them. And remember that though you are for the most part unconscious of the spiritual meaning of what you say, the instinctive satisfaction you have in saying it is as much a real movement of the spirit within you, as the beating of your heart is a real movement of the body, though you are unconscious of that also, till you put your hand on it. Put your hand also, so to speak, upon the source of the satisfaction with which you use this curse; and ascertain the law of it.

Now this you may best do by considering what it is which will make the eyes and the limbs blessed. For the precise contrary of that must be their damnation. What do you think was the meaning of that saying of Christ's, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see"? For to be made evermore incapable of seeing such things, must be the condemnation of the eyes. It is not merely the capacity of seeing sunshine, which is their blessing; but of seeing certain things under the sunshine; nay, perhaps, even without sunshine, the eye itself becoming a Sun. Therefore, on the other hand, the curse upon the eyes will not be mere blindness to the daylight, but blindness to particular things under the daylight; so that, when directed towards these, the eye itself becomes as the Night.

Again, with regard to the limbs, or general powers of the body. Do you suppose that when it is promised that "the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing"—(Steam-whistle interrupts me from the *Capo d' Istria*, which is lying in front of my window with her black nose pointed at the red nose of another steamer at the next pier. There are nine large ones at this instant,—half-past six, morning, 4th July,—lying between the Church of the Redeemer and the Canal of the Arsenal; one of them an ironclad, five smoking fiercely, and the biggest,—English and half a quarter of a mile long,—blowing steam from all manner of pipes in her sides, and with such a roar through her funnel—whistle number two from *Capo d'Istria* that I could

not make any one hear me speak in this room without an effort,)—do you suppose, I say, that such a form of benediction is just the same as saying that the lame man shall leap as a lion, and the tongue of the dumb mourn? Not so, but a special manner of action of the members is meant in both cases: (whistle number three from *Capo d' Istria;* I am writing on, steadily, so that you will be able to form an accurate idea, from this page, of the intervals of time in modern music. The roaring from the English boat goes on all the while, for bass to the *Capo d' Istria's* treble, and a tenth steamer comes in sight round the Armenian Monastery)—a particular kind of activity is meant, I repeat, in both cases. The lame man is to leap, (whistle fourth from *Capo d' Istria*, this time at high pressure, going through my head like a knife,) as an innocent and joyful creature leaps, and the lips of the dumb to move melodiously: they are to be blest, so; may not be unblest even in silence; but are the absolute contrary of blest, in evil utterance. (Fifth whistle, a double one, from *Capo d' Istria*, and it is seven o'clock, nearly; and here's my coffee, and I must stop writing. Sixth whistle -the *Capo d' Istria* is off, with her crew of morning bathers. Seventh,—from I don't know which of the boats outside—and I count no more.)

*5th July.*

Yesterday, in these broken sentences, I tried to make you understand that for all human creatures there are necessarily three separate states: life

positive, under blessing,—life negative, under curse, —and death, neutral between these; and, henceforward, take due note of the quite true assumption you make in your ordinary malediction, that the state of condemnation may begin in this world, and separately affect every living member of the body.

You assume the fact of these two opposite states, then; but you have no idea whatever of the meaning of your words, nor of the nature of the blessedness or condemnation you admit. I will try to make your conception clearer.

In the year 1869, just before leaving Venice, I had been carefully looking at a picture by Victor Carpaccio, representing the dream of a young princess. Carpaccio has taken much pains to explain to us, as far as he can, the kind of life she leads, by completely painting her little bedroom in the light of dawn, so that you can see everything in it. It is lighted by two doubly-arched windows, the arches being painted crimson round their edges, and the capitals of the shafts that bear them, gilded. They are filled at the top with small round panes of glass; but beneath, are open to the blue morning sky, with a low lattice across them: and in the one at the back of the room are set two beautiful white Greek vases with a plant in each; one having rich dark and pointed green leaves, the other crimson flowers, but not of any species known to me, each at the end of a branch like a spray of heath.

These flower-pots stand on a shelf which runs all round the room, and beneath the window, at

about the height of the elbow, and serves to put things on anywhere: beneath it, down to the floor, the walls are covered with green cloth; but above, are bare and white. The second window is nearly opposite the bed, and in front of it is the princess's reading table, some two feet and a half square, covered by a red cloth with a white border and dainty fringe; and beside it her seat, not at all like a reading chair in Oxford, but a very small three-legged stool like a music-stool, covered with crimson cloth. On the table are a book set up at a slope fittest for reading, and an hour-glass. Under the shelf, near the table, so as to be easily reached by the outstretched arm, is a press full of books. The door of this has been left open, and the books, I am grieved to say, are rather in disorder, having been pulled about before the princess went to bed, and one left standing on its side.

Opposite this window, on the white wall, is a small shrine or picture, (I can't see which, for it is in sharp retiring perspective,) with a lamp before it, and a silver vessel hung from the lamp, looking like one for holding incense.

The bed is a broad four-poster, the posts being beautifully wrought golden or gilded rods, variously wreathed and branched, carrying a canopy of warm red. The princess's shield is at the head of it, and the feet are raised entirely above the floor of the room, on a dais which projects at the lower end so as to form a seat, on which the child has laid her crown. Her little blue slippers lie at the side of

the bed,—her white dog beside them. The coverlid is scarlet, the white sheet folded half way back over it; the young girl lies straight, bending neither at waist nor knee, the sheet rising and falling over her in a narrow unbroken wave, like the shape of the coverlid of the last sleep, when the turf scarcely rises. She is some seventeen or eighteen years old, her head is turned towards us on the pillow, the cheek resting on her hand, as if she were thinking, yet utterly calm in sleep, and almost colourless. Her hair is tied with a narrow riband, and divided into two wreaths, which encircle her head like a double crown. The white nightgown hides the arm raised on the pillow, down to the wrist.

At the door of the room an angel enters; (the little dog, though lying awake, vigilant, takes no notice.) He is a very small angel, his head just rises a little above the shelf round the room, and would only reach as high as the princess's chin, if she were standing up. He has soft grey wings, lustreless; and his dress, of subdued blue, has violet sleeves, open above the elbow, and showing white sleeves below. He comes in without haste, his body, like a mortal one, casting shadow from the light through the door behind, his face perfectly quiet; a palm-branch in his right hand—a scroll in his left.

So dreams the princess, with blessed eyes, that need no earthly dawn. It is very pretty of Carpaccio to make her dream out the angel's dress so particularly, and notice the slashed sleeves; and to

dream so little an angel—very nearly a doll angel,—bringing her the branch of palm, and message. But the lovely characteristic of all is the evident delight of her continual life. Royal power over herself, and happiness in her flowers, her books, her sleeping and waking, her prayers, her dreams, her earth, her heaven.

After I had spent my morning over this picture, I had to go to Verona by the afternoon train. In the carriage with me were two American girls with their father and mother, people of the class which has lately made so much money suddenly, and does not know what to do with it: and these two girls of about fifteen and eighteen, had evidently been indulged in everything (since they had had the means) which western civilization could imagine. And here they were, specimens of the utmost which the money and invention of the nineteenth century could produce in maidenhood,—children of its most progressive race,—enjoying the full advantages of political liberty, of enlightened philosophical education, of cheap pilfered literature, and of luxury at any cost. Whatever money, machinery, or freedom of thought could do for these two children, had been done. No superstition had deceived, no restraint degraded them:—types, they could not but be, of maidenly wisdom and felicity, as conceived by the forwardest intellects of our time.

And they were travelling through a district which, if any in the world, should touch the hearts and delight the eyes of young girls. Between

Venice and Verona! Portia's villa perhaps in sight upon the Brenta,—Juliet's tomb to be visited in the evening,—blue against the southern sky, the hills of Petrarch's home. Exquisite midsummer sunshine, with low rays, glanced through the vine-leaves; all the Alps were clear, from the lake of Garda to Cadore, and to farthest Tyrol. What a princess's chamber, this, if these are princesses, and what dreams might they not dream, therein!

But the two American girls were neither princesses, nor seers, nor dreamers. By infinite self-indulgence, they had reduced themselves simply to two pieces of white putty that could feel pain. The flies and the dust stuck to them as to clay, and they perceived, between Venice and Verona, nothing but the flies and the dust. They pulled down the blinds the moment they entered the carriage, and then sprawled, and writhed, and tossed among the cushions of it, in vain contest, during the whole fifty miles, with every miserable sensation of bodily affliction that could make time intolerable. They were dressed in thin white frocks, coming vaguely open at the backs as they stretched or wriggled; they had French novels, lemons, and lumps of sugar, to beguile their state with; the novels hanging together by the ends of string that had once stitched them, or adhering at the corners in densely bruised dog's-ears, out of which the girls, wetting their fingers, occasionally extricated a gluey leaf. From time to time they cut a lemon open, ground a lump of sugar backwards and forwards

over it till every fibre was in a treacly pulp; then sucked the pulp, and gnawed the white skin into leathery strings for the sake of its bitter. Only one sentence was exchanged, in the fifty miles, on the subject of things outside the carriage (the Alps being once visible from a station where they had drawn up the blinds).

"Don't those snow-caps make you cool?"

"No—I wish they did."

And so they went their way, with sealed eyes and tormented limbs, their numbered miles of pain.

There are the two states for you, in clearest opposition; Blessed, and Accursed. The happy industry, and eyes full of sacred imagination of things that are not, (such sweet cosa, è la fede,) and the tortured indolence, and infidel eyes, blind even to the things that are.

"How do I know the princess is industrious?"

Partly by the trim state of her room,—by the hour-glass on the table,—by the evident use of all the books she has, (well bound, every one of them, in stoutest leather or velvet, and with no dog's-ears,) but more distinctly from another picture of her, not asleep. In that one, a prince of England has sent to ask her in marriage: and her father, little liking to part with her, sends for her to his room to ask her what she would do. He sits, moody and sorrowful; she, standing before him in a plain housewifely dress, talks quietly, going on with her needlework all the time.

A work-woman, friends, she, no less than a

princess; and princess most in being so. In like manner, in a picture by a Florentine, whose mind I would fain have you know somewhat, as well as Carpaccio's—Sandro Botticelli—the girl who is to be the wife of Moses, when he first sees her at the desert-well, has fruit in her left hand, but a distaff in her right.*

"To do good work, whether you live or die," it is the entrance to all Princedoms; and if not done, the day will come, and that infallibly, when you must labour for evil instead of good.

It was some comfort to me, that second of May last, at Pisa, to watch the workman's ashamed face, as he struck the old marble cross to pieces. Stolidly and languidly he dealt the blows,—down-looking,—so far as in anywise sensitive, ashamed,—and well he might be.

It was a wonderful thing to see done. This Pisan chapel, first built in 1230, then called the Oracle, or Oratory,—"Oraculum, vel Oratorium"—of the Blessed Mary of the New Bridge, afterwards called the Sea-bridge, (Ponte-a-Mare,) was a shrine like that of ours on the Bridge of Wakefield; a boat-man's praying-place: you may still see, or might, ten years since, have seen, the use of such a thing at the mouth of Boulogne Harbour, when the mackerel boats went out in a fleet at early dawn. There used to be a little shrine at the end of the longest pier;

* More accurately a rod cloven into three at the top, and so holding the wool. The fruit is a branch of apples; she has golden sandals, and a wreath of myrtle round her hair.

and as the Bonne Espérance, or Grâce-de-Dieu, or Vierge Marie, or Notre Dame des Dunes, or Reine des Anges, rose on the first surge of the open sea, their crews bared their heads, and prayed for a few seconds. So also the Pisan oarsmen looked back to their shrine, many-pinnacled, standing out from the quay above the river, as they dropped down Arno under their sea bridge, bound for the Isles of Greece. Later, in the fifteenth century, "there was laid up in it a little branch of the Crown of Thorns of the Redeemer, which a merchant had brought home, enclosed in a little urn of Beyond-sea," (ultramarine), and its name was changed to "St. Mary's of the Thorn."

In the year 1840 I first drew it, then as perfect as when it was built. Six hundred and ten years had only given the marble of it a tempered glow, or touched its sculpture here and there with softer shade. I daguerrotyped the eastern end of it some years later, (photography being then unknown,) and copied the daguerrotype, that people might not be plagued in looking, by the lustre. The frontispiece to this letter is engraved from the drawing, and will show you what the building was like.

But the last quarter of a century has brought changes, and made the Italians wiser. British Protestant missionaries explained to them that they had only got a piece of blackberry stem in their ultramarine box. German philosophical missionaries explained to them that the Crown of Thorns itself was only a graceful metaphor. French

republican missionaries explained to them that chapels were inconsistent with liberty on the quay; and their own Engineering missionaries of civilization explained to them that steam-power was independent of the Madonna. And now in 1872, rowing by steam, digging by steam, driving by steam, here, behold, are a troublesome pair of human arms out of employ. So the Engineering missionaries fit them with hammer and chisel, and set them to break up the Spina Chapel.

A costly kind of stone-breaking, this, for Italian parishes to set paupers on! Are there not rocks enough of Apennine, think you, they could break down instead? For truly, the God of their Fathers, and of their land, would rather see them mar His own work, than His children's.

Believe me, faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

## LETTER XXI

*DIVIDEND*

DULWICH,
*10th August*, 1872.

MY FRIENDS,—

I HAVE not yet fully treated the subject of my last letter, for I must show you how things, as well as people, may be blessed, or cursed; and to show you that, I must explain to you the story of Achan the son of Carmi, which, too probably, you don't feel at present any special interest in; as well as several matters more about steam-engines and steam-whistling: but, in the meantime, here is my lost bit of letter from Florence, written in continuation of the June number; and it is well that it should be put into place at once, (I see that it notices, incidentally, some of the noises in Florence, which might with advantage cease) since it answers the complaints of two aggrieved readers.

FLORENCE, *10th June*, 1872.

The first is in a letter from a workman, interesting in many respects; and besides, sufficiently representing the kind of expostulation now constantly made with me, on my not advertising either these letters, or any other of my writings. These

remonstrances, founded as they always are, very politely, on the assumption that every one who reads my books derives extraordinary benefit from them, require from me, at least, the courtesy of more definite answer than I have hitherto found time to give.

In the first place, my correspondents write under the conviction,—a very natural one,—that no individual practice can have the smallest power to change or check the vast system of modern commerce, or the methods of its transaction.

I, on the contrary, am convinced that it is by his personal conduct that any man of ordinary power will do the greatest amount of good that is in him to do; and when I consider the quantity of wise talking which has passed in at one long ear of the world, and out at the other, without making the smallest impression upon its mind, I am sometimes tempted for the rest of my life to try and do what seems to me rational, silently; and to speak no more.

But were it only for the exciting of earnest talk, action is highly desirable, and is, in itself, advertisement of the best. If, for instance, I had only written in these letters that I disapproved of advertisements, and had gone on advertising the letters themselves, you would have passed by my statement contemptuously, as one in which I did not believe myself. But now, most of my readers are interested in the opinion, dispute it eagerly, and are ready to hear patiently what I can say in its defence.

For main defence of it, I reply (now definitely to my correspondent of the Black Country):—You ought to read books, as you take medicine, by advice, and not advertisement. Perhaps, however, you *do* take medicine by advertisement, but you will not, I suppose, venture to call that a wise proceeding? Every good physician, at all events, knows it to be an unwise one, and will by no means consent to proclaim even his favourite pills by the town-crier. But perhaps you have no literary physician,—no friend to whom you can go and say, "I want to learn what is true on such a subject—what book must I read?" You prefer exercising your independent judgment, and you expect me to appeal to it, by paying for the insertion in all the penny papers of a paragraph that may win your confidence. As, for instance, "Just published, the —th number of 'Fors Clavigera,' containing the most important information on the existing state of trade in Europe; and on all subjects interesting to the British Operative. Thousandth thousand. Price *7d.* 7 for *3s. 6d.* Proportional abatement on large orders. No intelligent workman should pass a day without acquainting himself with the entirely original views contained in these pages."

You don't want to be advised in that manner, do you say? but only to know that such a book exists. What good would its existence do you, if you did not know whether it was worth reading? Were you as rich as Crœsus, you have no business to

spend such a sum as *7d.* unless you are sure of your money's worth. Ask some one who knows good books from bad ones to tell you what to buy, and be content. You will hear of 'Fors,' so, in time;—if it be worth hearing of.

But you have no acquaintance, you say, among people who know good books from bad ones? Possibly not; and yet, half the poor gentlemen of England are fain now-a-days to live by selling their opinions on this subject. It is a bad trade, let me tell them. Whatever judgment they have, likely to be useful to the human beings about them, may be expressed in few words; and those words of sacred advice ought not to be articles of commerce. Least of all ought they to be so ingeniously concocted that idle readers may remain content with reading their eloquent account of a book, instead of the book itself. It is an evil trade, and in our company of Mont Rose, we will have no reviewers; we will have, once for all, our book Gazette, issued every 1st of January, naming, under alphabetical list of authors and of titles, whatever serviceable or worthy writings have been published during the past year; and if, in the space of the year following, we have become acquainted with the same thoroughly, our time will not have been ill-spent, though we hear of no new book for twelve months. And the choice of the books to be named, as well as the brief accounts of them given in our Gazette, will be by persons not paid for their opinions, and who will not, therefore, express themselves voluminously.

Meantime, your newspapers being your present advisers, I beg you to observe that a number of 'Fors' is duly sent to all the principal ones, whose editors may notice it if they choose; but I will not pay for their notice, nor for any man's.

These, then, are my immediate reasons for not advertising. Indirect ones, I have, which weigh with me no less. I write this morning, wearily, and without spirit, being nearly deaf with the bell-ringing and bawling which goes on here, at Florence, ceaselessly, in advertisement of prayers, and wares; as if people could not wait on God for what they wanted, but God had to ring for them, like waiters, for what *He* wanted: and as if they could think of nothing they were in need of till the need was suggested to them by bellowing at their doors, or bill-posting on their house-corners. Indeed, the fresco-painting of the bill-sticker is likely, so far as I see, to become the principal fine art of modern Europe: here, at all events, it is now the principal source of street effect. Giotto's time is past, like Oderigi's; but the bill-poster succeeds: and the Ponte Vecchio, the principal thoroughfare across the Arno, is on one side plastered over with bills in the exact centre, while the other side, for various reasons not to be specified, is little available to passengers.

The bills on the bridge are theatrical, announcing cheap operas; but religious bills, inviting to ecclesiastical festivities, are similarly plastered over the front of the church once called "the Bride" for its

beauty; and the pious bill-stickers paste them ingeniously in and out upon the sculptured bearings of the shields of the old Florentine knights. Political bills, in various stages of decomposition, decorate the street-corners and sheds of the markets; and among the last year's rags of these one may still read here and there the heroic apostrophe, "Rome! or Death."

It never was clear to me, until now, what the desperately-minded persons who found themselves in that dilemma, wanted with Rome; and now it is quite clear to me that they never *did* want it,—but only the ground it was once built on, for finance offices and railroad stations: or, it may be, for new graves, when Death, to young Italy, as to old, comes *without* alternative. For, indeed, young Italy has just chosen the most precious piece of ground above Florence, and a twelfth-century church in the midst of it, to bury itself in, at its leisure; and make the summer air loathsome and pestiferous, from San Miniato to Arcetri.

No Rome, I repeat, did young Italy want; but only the site of Rome. Three days before I left it, I went to see a piece not merely of the rampart, but of the actual wall, of Tullius, which zealous Mr. Parker with fortunate excavation has just laid open on the Aventine. Fifty feet of blocks of massy stone, duly laid; not one shifted; a wall which was just eighteen hundred years old when Westminster Abbey was begun building. I went to see it mainly for your sakes, for after I have got past Theseus and

his vegetable soup, I shall have to tell you something of the constitutions of Servius Tullius; and besides, from the sweet slope of vineyard beneath this king's wall, one looks across the fields where Cincinnatus was found ploughing, according to Livy; though, you will find, in Smith's Dictionary, that Mr. Niebuhr "has pointed out all the inconsistencies and impossibilities in this legend;" and that he is "inclined to regard it as altogether fabulous."

Very possibly it may be so, (not that, for my own poor part, I attach much importance to Niebuhr's "inclinations,") but it is fatally certain that whenever you begin to seek the real authority for legends, you will generally find that the ugly ones have good foundation, and the beautiful ones none. Be prepared for this; and remember that a lovely legend is all the more precious when it *has* no foundation. Cincinnatus might actually have been found ploughing beside the Tiber fifty times over; and it might have signified little to any one;—least of all to you or me. But if Cincinnatus never was so found, nor ever existed at all in flesh and blood; but the great Roman nation, in its strength of conviction that manual labour in tilling the ground was good and honourable, invented a quite bodiless Cincinnatus; and set him, according to its fancy, in furrows of the field, and put its own words into his mouth, and gave the honour of its ancient deeds into his ghostly hand; *this* fable, which has no foundation,—this precious coinage of the brain and

conscience of a mighty people, you and I—believe me—had better read, and know, and take to heart, diligently.

Of which at another time: the point in question just now being that this same slope of the Aventine, under the wall of Tullius, falling to the shore of Tiber just where the Roman galleys used to be moored, (the marbles worn by the cables are still in the bank of it there,) and opposite the farm of Cincinnatus, commands, as you may suppose, fresh air and a fine view,—and has just been sold on "building leases."

Sold, I heard, to an English company; but more probably to the agents of the society which is gradually superseding, with its splendid bills at all the street corners, the last vestiges of "Roma, o morte,"—the "Società Anonima," for providing lodgings for company in Rome.

Now this anonymous society, which is about to occupy itself in rebuilding Rome, is of course composed of persons who know nothing whatever about building. They also care about it as little as they know; but they take to building, because they expect to get interest for their money by such operation. Some of them, doubtless, are benevolent persons, who expect to benefit Italy by building, and think that, the more the benefit, the larger will be the dividend. Generally the public notion of such a society would be that it was getting interest for its money in a most legitimate way, by doing useful work, and that Roman

comfort and Italian prosperity would be largely promoted by it.

But observe in what its dividends will consist. Knowing nothing about architecture, nor caring, it neither can choose, nor will desire to choose, an architect of merit. It will give its business to the person whom it supposes able to build the most attractive mansions at the least cost. Practically, the person who can and will do so, is the architect who knows where to find the worst bricks, the worst iron, and the worst workmen, and who has mastered the cleverest tricks by which to turn these to account. He will turn them to account by giving the external effect to his edifices which he finds likely to be attractive to the majority of the public in search of lodging. He will have stucco mouldings, veneered balconies, and cast-iron pillars: but, as his own commission will be paid on the outlay, he will assuredly make the building costly in some way or other; and he can make it costly with least trouble to himself by putting into it, somewhere, vast masses of merely squared stone, chiselled so as to employ handicraftsmen on whose wages commission can be charged, and who all the year round may be doing the same thing, without giving any trouble by asking for directions. Hence there will be assuredly in the new buildings an immense mass of merely squared or rusticated stones; for these appear magnificent to the public mind,—need no trouble in designing, and pay a vast commission on the execution.

The interior apartments will, of course, be made

as luxurious as possible; for the taste of the European public is at present practically directed by women of the town; these having the government of the richest of our youth at the time when they spend most freely. And at the very time when the last vestiges of the heroic works of the Roman Monarchy are being destroyed, the *base fresco-painting of the worst times of the Empire is being faithfully copied*, with perfectly true lascivious instinct, for interior decoration.

Of such architecture the anonymous society will produce the most it can; and lease it at the highest rents it can; and advertise and extend itself, so as, if possible, at last to rebuild, after its manner, all the great cities of Italy. Now the real moving powers at the bottom of all this are essentially the vanity and lust of the middle classes, all of them seeking to live, if it may be, in a cheap palace, with as much cheap pleasure as they can have in it, and the airs of great people. By 'cheap' pleasure, I mean, as I will show you in explaining the nature of cursed things, pleasure which has not been won by attention, or deserved by toil, but is snatched or forced by wanton passion. But the mechanical power which gives effect to this vanity and lust, is the instinct of the anonymous society, and of other such, to get a dividend by catering for them.

It has chanced, by help of the Third Fors, (as again and again in the course of these letters the thing to my purpose has been brought before me just when I needed it,) that having to speak of

interest of money, and first of the important part of it consisting in rents, I should be able to lay my finger on the point of land in all Europe where the principle of it is, at this moment, doing the most mischief. But, of course, all our great building work is now carried on in the same way; nor will any architecture, properly so called, be now possible for many years in Europe. For true architecture is a thing which puts its builders to cost—not which pays them dividends. If a society chose to organize itself to build the most beautiful houses, and the strongest that it could, either for art's sake, or love's; either palaces for itself, or houses for the poor; such a society would build something worth looking at, but not get dividends. True architecture is built by the man who wants a house for himself, and builds it to his own liking, at his own cost; not for his own gain, to the liking of other people.

All orders of houses may be beautiful when they are thus built by their master to his own liking. Three streets from me, at this moment, is one of the sixteenth century. The corner stones of it are ten feet long by three broad, and two thick—fifty courses of such, and the cornice; flawless stones, laid as level as a sea-horizon, so that the walls become one solid mass of unalterable rock,—four grey cliffs set square in mid-Florence, some hundred and twenty feet from cornice to ground. The man who meant to live in it built it so; and Titian painted his little grand-daughter for him. He got no dividend by his building—no profit on his

picture. House and picture, absolutely untouched by time, remain to this day.

On the hills about me at Coniston there are also houses built by their owners, according to their means, and pleasure. A few loose stones gathered out of the fields, set one above another to a man's height from the ground; a branch or two of larch, set gable-wise across them,—on these some turf, cut from the next peat moss. It is enough: the owner gets no dividend on his building; but he has covert from wind and rain, and is honourable among the sons of Earth. He has built as best he could, to his own mind.

You think that there ought to be no such differences in habitation: that nobody should live in a palace, and nobody under a heap of turf? But if ever you become educated enough to know something about the arts, you will like to see a palace built in noble manner; and if ever you become educated enough to know something about men, you will love some of them so well as to desire that at least they should live in palaces, though you cannot. But it will be long now before you can know much, either about arts or men. The one point you may be assured of is, that your happiness does not at all depend on the size of your house—(or, if it does, rather on its smallness than largeness); but depends entirely on your having peaceful and safe possession of it—on your habits of keeping it clean and in order—on the materials of it being trustworthy, if they are no more than stone

and turf—and on your contentment with it, so that gradually you may mend it to your mind, day by day, and leave it to your children a better house than it was.

To your children, and to theirs, desiring for them that they may live as you have lived; and not strive to forget you, and stammer when any one asks who you were, because, forsooth, they have become fine folks by your help.

EUSTON HOTEL, 18*th August.*

Thus far I had written at Florence. To-day I received a severe lesson from a friend whose teaching is always serviceable to me, of which the main effect was to show me that I had been wrong in allowing myself so far in the habit of jesting, either in these letters, or in any other of my books, on grave subjects; and that although what little play I had permitted, rose, as I told you before, out of the nature of the things spoken of, it prevented many readers from understanding me rightly, and was an offence to others. The second effect of the lesson was to show me how vain it was, in the present state of English literature and mind, to expect anybody to attend to the real force of the words I wrote; and that it would be better to spare myself much of the trouble I took in choosing them, and try to get things explained by reiteration instead of precision, or, if I was too proud to do that, to write less myself, and only urge your attention, or aid it, to other people's happier sayings. Which indeed I meant to do, as 'Fors' went on; for I have always thought

that more true force of persuasion might be obtained by rightly choosing and arranging what others have said, than by painfully saying it again in one's own way. And since as to the matter which I have to teach you, all the great writers and thinkers of the world are agreed, without any exception whatsoever, it is certain I can teach you better in other men's words than my own, if I can lay my hand at once on what I want of them. And the upshot of the lesson, and of my meditation upon it, is, that henceforward to the end of the year I will try very seriously to explain, as I promised, step by step, the things put questionably in last year's letters. We will conclude therefore first, and as fast as we can, the debate respecting interest of money which was opened in my letter of January, 1871.

An impatient correspondent of mine, Mr. W. C. Sillar, who has long been hotly engaged in testifying publicly against the wickedness of taking interest, writes to me that all I say is mysterious, that I am bound to speak plainly, and, above everything, if I think taking interest sinful, not to hold bank stock.

Once for all, then, Mr. Sillar is wholly right as to the abstract fact that lending for gain is sinful; and he has, in various pamphlets, shown unanswerably that whatever is said either in the Bible, or in any other good and ancient book, respecting usury, is intended by the writers to apply to the receiving of interest, be it ever so little. But Mr. Sillar has allowed this idea to take possession of

him, body and soul;* and is just as fondly enthusiastic about abolition of usury as some other people are about the liquor laws. Now of course drunkenness is mischievous, and usury is mischievous, and whoredom is mischievous, and idleness is mischievous. But we cannot reform the world by preaching temperance only, nor refusal of interest only, nor chastity only, nor industry only. I am myself more set on teaching healthful industry than anything else, as the beginning of all redemption; then, purity of heart and body; if I can get these taught, I know that nobody so taught will either get drunk, or, in any unjust manner, "either a borrower or a lender be." But I expect also far higher results than either of these, on which, being utterly bent, I am very careless about such minor matters as the present conditions either of English brewing or banking. I hold bank stock simply because I suppose it to be safer than any other stock, and I take the interest of it, because

* I have not time to ask Mr. Sillar's permission, but hope his pardon for assuming it, to print the following portion of a letter I have had very great pleasure in receiving from him :—

"You wrong me in saying I have entirely given myself up to this question. I am occupied in saving our lovely streams from pollution, and endeavouring (no easy task, I assure you,) to put in daily practice, the principles you teach. I wish you could see our works at Crossness.

"The reason why I *exclusively* attack this vice is because it is the only one which is not attacked from the pulpit. Men do not know even that it is a vice. I have such confidence in the integrity of Englishmen that I believe they would at once discountenance it if they had the least idea of its character and mischievous nature."

though taking interest is, in the abstract, as wrong as war, the entire fabric of society is at present so connected with both usury and war, that it is not possible violently to withdraw, nor wisely to set example of withdrawing, from either evil. I entirely, in the abstract, disapprove of war; yet have the profoundest sympathy with Colonel Yea and his fusiliers at Alma, and only wish I had been there with them. I have by no means equal sympathy either with bankers or landlords; but am certain that for the present it is better that I receive my dividends as usual, and that Miss Hill should continue to collect my rents in Marylebone.

"Ananias over again, or worse," Mr. Sillar will probably exclaim, when he reads this, and invoke lightning against me. I will abide the issue of his invocation, and only beg him to observe respecting either ancient or modern denunciations of interest, that they are much beside the mark unless they are accompanied with some explanation of the manner in which borrowing and lending, when necessary, can be carried on without it. Neither *are* often necessary in healthy states of society; but they always must remain so to some extent; and the name "Mount of Pity," * given still in French and Italian to the pawnbroker's shop, descends from a

* The "Mount" is the heap of money in store for lending without interest. You shall have a picture of it in next number, as drawn by a brave landscape painter four hundred years ago; and it will ultimately be one of the crags of our own Mont Rose; and well should be, for it was first raised among the rocks of Italy by a

time when lending to the poor was as much a work of mercy as giving to them. And both lending and borrowing are virtuous, when the borrowing is prudent, and the lending kind; how much otherwise than kind lending at interest usually is, you, I suppose, do not need to be told; but how much otherwise than prudent nearly all borrowing is, and above everything, trade on a large scale on borrowed capital, it is very necessary for us all to be told. And for a beginning of other people's words, here are some quoted by Mr. Sillar from a work on the Labour question recently published in Canada, which, though common-place, and evidently the expressions of a person imperfectly educated, are true, earnest, and worth your reading:—

"These Scripture usury laws, then, are for no particular race and for no particular time. They lie at the very foundations of national progress and wealth. They form the only great safeguards of labour, and are the security of civil society, and the strength and protection of commerce itself. Let us beware, for our own sakes, how we lay our hand upon the barriers which God has reared around the humble dwelling of the labouring man. . . .

"Business itself is a pleasure, but it is the anxieties and burdens of business arising all out of

Franciscan monk, for refuge to the poor against the usury of the Lombard merchants who gave name to our Lombard Street, and perished by their usury, as their successors are like enough to do also. But the story goes back to Friedrich II. of Germany again, and is too long for this letter.

this debt system, which have caused so many aching pillows and so many broken hearts. What countless multitudes, during the last three hundred years, have gone down to bankruptcy and shame—what fair prospects have been for ever blighted—what happy homes desolated—what peace destroyed—what ruin and destruction have ever marched hand in hand with this system of debt, paper, and usury! Verily its sins have reached unto heaven and its iniquities are very great.

"What shall the end of these things be? God only knoweth. I fear the system is beyond a cure. All the great interests of humanity are overborne by it, and nothing can flourish as it ought till it is taken out of the way. It contains within itself, as we have at times witnessed, most potent elements of destruction which in one hour may bring all its riches to nought."

Here, lastly for this month, is another piece of Marmontel for you, describing an ideal landlord's mode of "investing" his money; losing, as it appears, half his income annually by such investment, yet by no means with "aching pillows" or broken hearts for the result. (By the way, for a lesson in writing, observe that I know the Canada author to be imperfectly educated merely by one such phrase as "aching pillow"—for pillows don't ache—and again, by his thinking it religious and impressive to say "knoweth" instead of "knows.") But listen to Marmontel.

"In the neighbourhood of this country-house lived a kind of Philosopher, not an old one, but in the prime of life, who, after having enjoyed everything that he could during six months of the year in town, was in the habit of coming to enjoy six months of his own company in a voluptuous solitude. He presently came to call upon Elise. 'You have the reputation of a wise man, sir,' she said—'tell me, what is your plan of life?' 'My plan, madame? I have never had any,' answered the count. 'I do everything that amuses me. I seek everything that I like, and I avoid with care everything that annoys or displeases me.' 'Do you live alone, or do you see people?' asked Elise. 'I see sometimes our clergyman, whom I lecture on morals. I chat with labourers, who are better informed than all our servants. I give balls to little village girls, the prettiest in the world. I arrange little lotteries for them, of laces and ribands.' (Wrong, Mr. Philosopher: as many ribands as you please; but no lotteries.) 'What?' said Elise, with great surprise, 'do those sort of people know what love is?' 'Better than we do, madame—better than we do a hundred times; they love each other like turtle-doves—they make me wish to be married myself?' 'You will confess, however,' said Elise, 'that they love without any delicacy.' 'Nay, madame, delicacy is a refinement of art—they have only the instincts of nature; but, indeed, they have in feeling what we have only in fancy. I have tried, like another, to love, and

to be beloved, in the town,—there, caprice and fashion arrange everything, or derange it:—here, there is true liking, and true choice. You will see in the course of the gaieties I give them, how these simple and tender hearts seek each other, without knowing what they are doing.' 'You give me,' replied Elise, 'a picture of the country I little expected; everybody says those sort of people are so much to be pitied.' 'They were so, madame, some years since; but I have found the secret of rendering their condition more happy.' 'Oh! you must tell me your secret!' interrupted Elise, with vivacity. 'I wish also to put it in practice.' 'Nothing can be easier,' replied the count,—'this is what I do: I have about two thousand a year of income; I spend five hundred in Paris, in the two visits that I make there during the year,—five hundred more in my country-house,—and I have a thousand to spare, which I spend on my exchanges.' 'And what exchanges do you make?' 'Well,' said the count, 'I have fields well cultivated, meadows well watered, orchards delicately hedged, and planted with care.' 'Well! what then?' 'Why, Lucas, Blaise, and Nicholas, my neighbours, and my good friends, have pieces of land neglected or worn out; they have no money to cultivate them. I give them a bit of mine instead, acre for acre; and the same space of land which hardly fed them, enriches them in two harvests; the earth which is ungrateful under their hands, becomes fertile in mine. I choose the seed for it, the way of digging,

the manure which suits it best, and as soon as it is in good state, I think of another exchange. Those are my amusements.' 'That is charming!' cried Elise; 'you know then the art of agriculture?' 'I learn a little of it, madame; every day, I oppose the theories of the savants to the experience of the peasants. I try to correct what I find wrong in the reasonings of the one, and in the practice of the other.' 'That is an amusing study; but how you ought to be adored then in these cantons! these poor labourers must regard you as their father!' 'On each side, we love each other very much, madame.'"

This is all very pretty, but falsely romantic, and not to be read at all with the unqualified respect due to the natural truth of the passages I before quoted to you from Marmontel. He wrote this partly in the hope of beguiling foolish and selfish persons to the unheard-of amusement of doing some good to their fellow-creatures; but partly also in really erroneous sentiment, his own character having suffered much deterioration by his compliance with the manners of the Court in the period immediately preceding the French Revolution. Many of the false relations between the rich and poor, which could not but end in such catastrophe, are indicated in the above-quoted passage. There is no recognition of duty on either side: the landlord enjoys himself benevolently, and the labourers receive his benefits in placid gratitude, without being either provoked or instructed to help themselves. Their

material condition is assumed to be necessarily wretched unless continually relieved; while their household virtue and honour are represented (truly) as purer than those of their masters. The Revolution could not do away with this fatal anomaly; to this day the French peasant is a better man than his lord; and no government will be possible in France until she has learned that all authority, before it can be honoured, must be honourable.

But, putting the romantic method of operation aside, the question remains whether Marmontel is right in his main idea that a landlord should rather take £2,000 in rents, and return £1,000 in help to his tenants, than remit the £1,000 of rents at once. To which I reply, that it is primarily better for the State, and ultimately for the tenant, that administrative power should be increased in the landlord's hands; but that it ought not to be by rents which he can change at his own pleasure, but by fixed duties under State law. Of which, in due time; —I do not say in my next letter, for that would be mere defiance of the Third Fors.

Ever faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

THE MOUNT OF COMPASSION,

AND CORONATION OF ITS BUILDER.

*Drawn thus by* SANDRO BOTTICELLI.

## LETTER XXII

*THE MOUNT OF COMPASSION*

BRANTWOOD,
*19th September*, 1872.

MY FRIENDS,—

I AM to-day to begin explaining to you the meaning of my own books, which, some people will tell you, is an egotistical and impertinent thing for an author to do. My own view of the matter is, that it is generally more egotistical and impertinent to explain the meaning of other people's books,—which, nevertheless, at this day in England, many young and inexperienced persons are paid for pretending to do. What intents I have had, myself, therefore, in this 'Fors Clavigera,' and some other lately published writings, I will take on me to tell you, without more preamble.

And first, for their little vignette stamp of roses on title-page. It is copied from the clearest bit of the pattern of the petticoat of Spring, where it is drawn tight over her thigh, in Sandro Botticelli's picture of her, at Florence. I drew it on the wood myself, and Mr. Burgess cut it; and it is on all my title-pages, because whatever I now write is meant to help in founding the society called of 'Monte Rosa;'—see the seventeenth of these letters, p. 336.

Such reference hereafter, observe, is only thus printed, (XVII. 336).

And I copied this vignette from Sandro Botticelli, for two reasons: first, that no man has ever yet drawn, and none is likely to draw for many a day, roses as well as Sandro has drawn them; secondly, because he was the only painter of Italy who thoroughly felt and understood Dante; and the only one also who understood the thoughts of Heathens and Christians equally, and could in a measure paint both Aphrodite and the Madonna. So that he is, on the whole, the most universal of painters; and, take him all in all, the greatest Florentine workman: and I wish you to know with Dante's opinions, his, also, on all subjects of importance to you, of which Florentines could judge.

And of his life, it is proper for you immediately to know thus much: or at least, that so much was current gossip about it in Vasari's time,—that, when he was a boy, he obstinately refused to learn either to read, write, or sum; (and I heartily wish all boys would and could do the same, till they were at least as old as the illiterate Alfred,) whereupon his father, "disturbed by these eccentric habits of his son, turned him over in despair to a gossip of his, called Botticello, who was a goldsmith."

And on this, note two things: the first, that all the great early Italian masters of painting and sculpture, without exception, began by being goldsmiths' apprentices; the second, that they all felt

themselves so indebted to, and formed by the master-craftsman who had mainly disciplined their fingers, whether in work on gold or marble, that they practically considered him their father, and took *his* name rather than their own; so that most of the great Italian workmen are now known, not by their own names, but by those of their masters,* the master being himself often entirely forgotten by the public, and eclipsed by his pupil; but immortal *in* his pupil, and named in his name. Thus, our Sandro, Alessandro, or Alexander's own name was Filipepi; which name you never heard of, I suppose, till now: nor I, often, but his master's was Botticello; of which master we nevertheless know only that he so formed, and informed, this boy, that thenceforward the boy thought it right to be called "Botticello's Sandro," and nobody else's. Which in Italian is Sandro di Botticello; and that is abbreviated into Sandro Botticelli. So, Francesco Francia is short for Francesco di Francia, or "Francia's Francis," though nobody ever heard, except thus, of his master the goldsmith, Francia. But his own name was Raibolini. So, Philip Brunelleschi is short for Brunellesco's Philip, Brunellesco being his father's *Christian* name, to show how much he owed to his father's careful training; (the family name was Lippo;) and, which is the prettiest instance of all, "Piero della Francesca,"

* Or of their native towns or villages,—these being recognized as masters, also.

means 'Francesca's Peter;' because he was chiefly trained by his mother, Francesca. All of which I beg you to take to heart, and meditate on, concerning Mastership and Pupilage.

But to return to Sandro.

Having learned prosperously how to manage gold, he takes a fancy to know how to manage colour; and is put by his good father under, as it chanced, the best master in Florence, or the world, at that time—the Monk Lippi, whose work is the finest, out and out, that ever monk did; which I attribute, myself, to what is usually considered faultful in him,—his having run away with a pretty novice out of a convent. I am not jesting, I assure you, in the least; but how can I possibly help the nature of things, when *that* chances to be laughable? Nay, if you think of it, perhaps you will not find it so laughable that Lippi should be the only monk (if this be a fact), who ever did good painter's work.

Be that as it may, Lippi and his pupil were happy in each other; and the boy soon became a smiter of colour, or colour-smith, no less than a gold-smith; and eventually an "Alexander the Coppersmith," also, not inimical to St. Paul, and for whom Christian people may wish, not revengefully, "the Lord reward him according to his works," though he was fain, Demetrius-like, sometimes to shrine Diana. And he painted, for a beginning, a figure of Fortitude; and then, one of St. Jerome, and then, one of our Lady, and then, one of Pallas, and then, one of Venus with the Graces and Zephyrs, and especially

the Spring aforesaid with flowery petticoats; and, finally, the Assumption of our Lady, with the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, the Evangelists, the Martyrs, the Confessors, the Doctors, the Virgins, and the Hierarchies. It is to be presumed that by this time he had learned to read, though we hear nothing of it, (rather the contrary, for he is taunted late in life with rude scholarship,)—and then paints under notable circumstances, of which presently, the calling of Moses, and of Aaron, and of Christ,—all well preserved and wonderful pieces, which no person now ever thinks of looking at, though they are the best works of pictorial divinity extant in Europe. And having thus obtained great honour and reputation, and considerable sums of money, he squandered all the last away; and then, returning to Florence, set himself to comment upon and illustrate Dante, engraving some plates for that purpose which I will try to give you a notion of, some day. And at this time, Savonarola beginning to make himself heard, and founding in Florence the company of the Piagnoni, (Mourners, or Grumblers, as opposed to the men of pleasure,) Sandro made a Grumbler of himself, being then some forty years old; and,—his new master being burned in the great square of Florence, a year afterwards (1498), —became a Grumbler to purpose; and doing what he could to show "che cosa è la fede," namely, in engraving Savonarola's "Triumph of Faith," fell sadder, wiser, and poorer, day by day; until he became a poor bedesman of Lorenzo de' Medici; and

having gone some time on crutches, being unable to stand upright, and received his due share of what I hope we may call discriminate charity, died peacefully in his fifty-eighth year, having lived a glorious life; and was buried at Florence, in the Church of all Saints, three hundred and fifty-seven years ago.

So much for my vignette. For my title, see II. 20, and XIII. 256. I mean it, as you will see by the latter passage, to be read, in English, as "Fortune the Nailbearer," and that the book itself should show you how to form, or make, this Fortune, see the fifth sentence down the page, in II. 20; and compare III. 41, 42.

And in the course of the first year's letters, I tried gradually to illustrate to you certain general propositions, which, if I had set them down in form at once, might have seemed to you too startling, or disputable, to be discussed with patience. So I tried to lead you into some discussion of them first, and now hope that you may endure the clearer statement of them, as follows:—

PROPOSITION I. (I. 1, 2).—The English nation is beginning another group of ten years, empty in purse, empty in stomach, and in a state of terrified hostility, to every other nation under the sun.

I assert this very firmly and seriously. But in the course of these papers every important assertion on the opposite side shall be fairly inserted; so that you may consider of them at your leisure. Here is one, for instance, from the *Morning Post* of Saturday, August 31, of this year:—"The country is at

the present moment in a state of such unexampled prosperity that it is actually suffering from the very superabundance of its riches. . . . Coals and meat are at famine prices, we are threatened with a strike among the bakers, and there is hardly a single department of industry in which the cost of production has not been enhanced."

This is exceedingly true; the *Morning Post* ought to have congratulated you further on the fact that the things produced by this greater cost are now usually good for nothing: Hear on this head, what Mr. Emerson said of us, even so far back as 1856 (and we have made much inferior articles since then). "England is aghast at the disclosure of her fraud in the adulteration of food, of drugs, and of almost every fabric in her mills and shops; finding that milk will not nourish, nor sugar sweeten, nor bread satisfy, nor pepper bite the tongue, nor glue stick. In true England all is false and forged. . . . It is rare to find a merchant who knows why a crisis occurs in trade,—why prices rise or fall, or who knows the mischief of paper money.* In the culmination of National Prosperity, in the annexation of countries; building of ships, depôts, towns; in the influx of tons of gold and silver; amid the chuckle of chancellors and financiers, it was found that bread rose to famine prices, that the yeoman was forced to sell his cow and pig, his tools, and

* Or the use of it, Mr. Emerson should have added.

his acre of land; and the dreadful barometer of the poor-rates was touching the point of ruin." *

PROPOSITION II. (I. 3).—Of such prosperity I, for one, have seen enough, and will endure it no longer quietly; but will set aside some part of my income to help, if anybody else will join me, in forming a National store instead of a National Debt; and will explain to you as I have time and power, how to avoid such distress in future, by adhering to the elementary principles of Human Economy, which have been of late wilfully entombed under pyramids of falsehood.

"Wilfully;" note this grave word in my second proposition; and invest a shilling in the purchase of 'Bishop Berkeley on Money,' being extracts from his 'Querist,' by James Harvey, Liverpool. † At the bottom of the twenty-first page you will find this query, "Whether the continuous efforts on the part of the *Times*, the *Telegraph*, ‡ the *Economist*, the *Daily News*, and the daily newspaper press, and also of moneyed men generally, to confound money and capital, be the result of ignorance or design."

Of ignorance in great part, doubtless, for "moneyed men, generally," are ignorant enough to believe and assert anything; but it is noticeable that their

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* 'English Traits,' (ROUTLEDGE, 1856), p. 95.

† PROVOST, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden.

‡ The *Telegraph* has always seemed to me to play fairer than the rest. The words "daily newspaper press" are, of course, too general.

ignorance always tells on their own side;* and the *Times* and *Economist* are now nothing more than passive instruments in their hands. But neither they, nor their organs, would long be able to assert untruths in Political Economy, if the nominal professors of the science would do their duty in investigation of it. Of whom I now choose, for direct personal challenge, the Professor at Cambridge; and, being a Doctor of Laws of his own University, and a Fellow of two colleges in mine, I charge him with having insufficiently investigated the principles of the science he is appointed to teach. I charge him with having advanced in defence of the theory of Interest on Money, four arguments, every one of them false, and false with such fallacy as a child ought to have been able to detect. I have exposed one of these fallacies at page 17 of the first letter, and the three others at page 363 to 366, of the eighteenth letter, in this book, and I now publicly call on Professor Fawcett either to defend, or retract, the statements so impugned. And this open challenge cannot be ignored by Professor Fawcett, on the plea that Political Economy is his province, and not mine. If any man holding definite position as a scholar in either University, challenged me publicly and gravely with having falsely defined an elementary principle of Art, I should hold myself bound to answer him, and I think public opinion would ratify my decision.

* Compare 'Munera Pulveris,' § 140.

PROPOSITION III. (I. 4).—Your redemption from the distress into which you have fallen is in your own hands, and in nowise depends on forms of government or modes of election.

But you must make the most of what forms of government you have got, by choosing honest men to work them (if you choose at all), and preparatorily, by honestly obeying them, and in all possible ways, making honest men of yourselves; and if it be indeed, now impossible—as I heard the clergyman declare at Matlock—(IX. 176) for any honest man to live by trade in England, amending the methods of English trade in the necessary particulars, until it becomes possible for honest men to live by it again. In the meantime resolving that you, for your part, will do good work, whether you live by it or die—(II. 39).

PROPOSITION IV. (I. 8–11).—Of present parliaments and governments you have mainly to enquire what they want with your money when they demand it. And that you may do this intelligently, you are to remember that only a certain quantity of money exists at any given time, and that your first business must be to ascertain the available amount of it, and what it is available for. Because you do not put more money into rich people's hands, when you succeed in putting into rich people's heads that they want something to-day which they had no occasion for yesterday. What they pay you for one thing, they cannot for another; and if they now spend their incomes, they can spend

no more. Which you will find they do, and always have done, and can, in fact, neither spend more, nor less—this income being indeed the quantity of food their land produces, by which all art and all manufacture must be supported, and of which no art or manufacture, except such as are directly and wisely employed on the land, can produce a morsel.

PROPOSITION V. (II. 22).—You had better take care of your squires. Their land, indeed, only belongs to them, or is said to belong, because they seized it long since by force of hand, (compare the quotation from Professor Fawcett at p. xix. of the preface to 'Munera Pulveris,') and you may think you have precisely the same right to seize it now, for yourselves, if you can. So you have,—precisely the same right,—that is to say, none. As they had no right to seize it then, neither have you now. The land, by divine right, can be neither theirs nor yours, except under conditions which you will not ascertain by fighting. In the meantime, by the law of England, the land is theirs; and your first duty as Englishmen is to obey the law of England, be it just or unjust, until it is by due and peaceful deliberation altered, if alteration of it be needful; and to be sure that you are able and willing to obey good laws, before you seek to alter unjust ones (II. 39). For you cannot know whether they are unjust or not until you are just yourselves. Also, your race of squires, considered merely as an animal one, is very precious; and you had

better see what use you can make of it, before you let it fall extinct, like the Dodo's. For none other such exists in any part of this round little world: and, once destroyed, it will be long before it develops itself again from Mr. Darwin's germ-cells.

PROPOSITION VI. (V. 101–102).—But, if you can, honestly, you had better become minute squires yourselves. The law of England nowise forbids your buying any land which the squires are willing to part with, for such savings as you may have ready. And the main proposal made to you in this book is that you should so economize till you can indeed become diminutive squires, and develope accordingly into some proportionate fineness of race.

PROPOSITION VII. (II. 23).—But it is perhaps not equally necessary to take care of your capitalists, or so-called 'Employers.' For your real employer is the public; and the so-called employer is only a mediator between the public and you, whose mediation is perhaps more costly than need be, to you both. So that it will be well for you to consider how far, without such intervention, you may succeed in employing *yourselves;* and my seventh proposition is accordingly that some of you, and all, in some proportion, should be diminutive capitalists, as well as diminutive squires, yet under a novel condition, as follows:—

PROPOSITION VIII.—Observe, first, that in the ancient and hitherto existent condition of things,

the squire is essentially an idle person who has possession of land, and lends it, but does not use it; and the capitalist is essentially an idle person, who has possession of tools, and lends them, but does not use them; while the labourer, by definition, is a laborious person, and by presumption, a penniless one, who is obliged to borrow both land and tools; and paying, for rent on the one, and profit on the other, what will maintain the squire and capitalist, digs finally a remnant of roots, wherewith to maintain himself.

These may, in so brief form, sound to you very radical and international definitions. I am glad, therefore, that (though entirely accurate) they are not mine, but Professor Fawcett's. You will find them quoted from his 'Manual of Political Economy' in my eleventh letter (p. 216). He does not, indeed, in the passage there quoted, define the capitalist as the possessor of tools, but he does so quite clearly at the end of the fable quoted in I. 17,—"The plane is the symbol of all capital," and the paragraph given in XI. 216, is, indeed, a most faithful statement of the present condition of things, which is, practically, that rich people are paid for being rich, and idle people are paid for being idle, and busy people taxed for being busy. Which does not appear to me a state of matters much longer tenable; but rather, and this is my 8th Proposition (XI. 219), that land should belong to those who can use *it*, and tools to those who can use *them;* or, as a less revolutionary, and instantly practicable,

proposal, that those who have land and tools—should use them.

PROPOSITION IX. and last:—To know the "use" either of land or tools, you must know what useful things can be grown from the one, and made with the other. And therefore to know what is useful, and what useless, and be skilful to provide the one, and wise to scorn the other, is the first need for all industrious men. Wherefore, I propose that schools should be established, wherein the use of land and tools shall be taught conclusively:—in other words, the sciences of agriculture (with associated river and sea-culture); and the noble arts and exercises of humanity.

Now you cannot but see how impossible it would have been for me, in beginning these letters, to have started with a formal announcement of these their proposed contents, even now startling enough, probably, to some of my readers, after nearly two years' preparatory talk. You must see also how in speaking of so wide a subject, it is not possible to complete the conversation respecting each part of it at once, and set that aside; but it is necessary to touch on each head by little and little. Yet in the course of desultory talk, I have been endeavouring to exhibit to you, essentially, these six following things, namely,—A, the general character and use of squires; B, the general character and mischievousness of capitalists; C, the nature of money; D, the nature of useful things; E, the methods of finance which obtain money;

and F, the methods of work which obtain useful things.

To these "six points" I have indeed directed my own thoughts, and endeavoured to direct yours, perseveringly, throughout these letters, though to each point as the Third Fors might dictate; that is to say, as light was thrown upon it in my mind by what might be publicly taking place at the time, or by any incident happening to me personally. Only it chanced that in the course of the first year, 1871, one thing which publicly took place, namely the siege and burning of Paris, was of interest so unexpected that it necessarily broke up what little consistency of plan I had formed, besides putting me into a humour in which I could only write incoherently; deep domestic vexation occurring to me at the same time, till I fell ill, and my letters and vexations had like to have ended together. So I must now patch the torn web as best I can, by giving you reference to what bears on each of the above six heads in the detached talk of these twenty months, (and I hope also a serviceable index at the two years' end); and, if the work goes on,—But I had better keep all Ifs out of it.

Meantime, with respect to point A, the general character and use of squires, you will find the meaning of the word 'Squire' given in II. 22, as being threefold, like that of Fors. First, it means a rider; or in more full and perfect sense, a master or governor of beasts: signifying that a squire has fine sympathy with all beasts of the field, and understanding of

their natures complete enough to enable him to govern them for their good, and be king over all creatures, subduing the noxious ones, and cherishing the virtuous ones. Which is the primal meaning of chivalry, the horse, as the noblest, because trainablest of wild creatures, being taken for a type of them all. Read on this point, IX. 171–173, and if you can see my larger books, at your library, § 205 of 'Aratra Pentelici;' and the last lecture in 'Eagle's Nest.'* And observe farther that it follows from what is noted in those places, that to be a good squire, one must have the instincts of animals as well as those of men; but that the typical squire is apt to err somewhat on the lower side, and occasionally to have the instincts of animals *instead* of those of men.

Secondly. The word 'Squire' means a Shield-bearer;—properly, the bearer of some superior person's shield; but at all events, the declarer, by legend, of good deserving and good intention, either others' or his own; with accompanying statement of his resolution to defend and maintain the same; and that so persistently that, rather than lose his shield, he is to make it his death-bed; and so honourably and without thought of vulgar gain, that it is the last blame of base governments to become 'shield-sellers;' (compare 'Munera Pulveris,' § 127). On this part of the Squire's character I have not yet been able to insist at any length; but you will find

* Compare also Mr. Maurice's sermon for the fourth Sunday after Trinity in Vol. II. of third series. (SMITH, ELDER & Co., no date.)

partial suggestion of the manner in which you may thus become yourselves shield-bearers, in 'Time and Tide,' §§ 72, 73, and I shall soon have the elementary copies in my Oxford schools published, and you may then learn, if you will, somewhat of shield-drawing and painting.

And thirdly, the word 'Squire' means a Carver, properly a carver at some one else's feast; and typically, has reference to the Squire's duty as a Carver at *all* men's feasts, being Lord of Land, and therefore giver of Food; in which function his lady, as you have heard now often enough, (first from Carlyle,) is properly styled Loaf-giver; her duty being, however, first of all to find out where all loaves come from; for, quite retaining his character in the other two respects, the typical squire is apt to fail in this, and to become rather a loaf-eater, or consumer, than giver, (compare X. 190, and X. 201); though even in that capacity the enlightened press of your day thinks you cannot do without him. (VII. 140.) Therefore, for analysis of what he has been, and may be, I have already specified to you certain squires, whose history I wish you to know and think over; (with many others in due course: but, for the present, those already specified are enough,) namely, the Theseus of the Elgin Marbles and Midsummer Night's Dream, (II. 21); the best and unfortunatest * of the Kings of France,

* In calling a man pre-eminently unfortunate, I do not mean that, as compared with others, he is absolutely less prosperous;

'St. Louis' (III. 46); the best and unfortunatest of the Kings of England, Henry II. (III. 48); the Lion-heart of England (III. 50); Edward III. of England and his lion's whelp, (IV. 72); again and again the two Second Friedrichs, of Germany and Prussia; Sir John Hawkwood, (I. 61, and XV. 300); Sir Thomas More, (VII. 128); Sir Francis Drake, (XIII. 263); and Sir Richard Grenville, (IX. 170). Now all these squires are alike in their high quality of captain-ship over man and beast; they were pre-eminently the best men of their surrounding groups of men; and the guides of their people, faithfully recognized for such; unless when their people got drunk, (which sometimes happened, with sorrowful issue,) and all equality with them seen to be divinely impossible. (Compare XIV. 277.) And that most of them lived by thieving does not, under the conditions of their day, in any wise detract from their virtue, or im-pair their delightfulness, (any more than it does that of your, on the whole I suppose, favourite, Englishman, and nomadic Squire of Sherwood, Robin Hode or Hood); the theft, or piracy, as it might happen, being always effected with a good con-science, and in an open, honourable, and merciful manner. Thus, in the account of Sir Francis's third voyage, which was faithfully taken out of the re-ports of Mr. Christofer Ceely, Ellis Hixon, and

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but that he is one who has met with the least help or the greatest hostility, from the Third Fors, *in proportion* to the wisdom of his purposes, and virtue of his character.

others who were in the same voyage with him, by Philip Nichols, preacher, revised and annotated by Sir Francis himself, and set forth by his nephew, what I told you about his proceedings on the coast of Spanish America (XIII. 264) is thus summed :—

"There were at this time belonging to Carthagene, Nombre de Dios, Rio Grand, Santa Martha, Rio de Hacha, Vera Cruz, Veragua, Nicaragua, the Honduras, Jamaica, &c., about two hundred frigates,* some of a hundred and twenty tunnes, other but of tenne or twelve tunne, but the most of thirty or forty tunne, which all had entercourse betweene Carthagene and Nombre de Dios, the most of which, during our abode in those parts, wee tooke, and some of them twice or thrice each, yet never burnt nor suncke any, unless they were made out men-of-warre against us. . . . Many strange birds, beastes, and fishes, besides fruits, trees, plants and the like were seene and observed of us in this journey, which, willingly, wee pretermit, as hastening to the end of our voyage, which from this Cape of St. Anthony wee intended to finish by sayling the directest and speediest way homeward, and accordingly even beyonde our owne expectation most happily performed. For whereas our captaine had purposed to touch at New-found-land, and there to have watered, which would have been some let unto

* Italian 'fregata,' I believe 'polished-sided' ship, for swiftness, 'fricata;' but the derivation is uncertain.

us, though wee stood in great want of water, yet God Almighty so provided for us, by giving us good store of raine water, that wee were sufficiently furnished; and within twenty-three dayes wee past from the Cape of Florida to the Iles of Silley, and so arrived at Plimouth on Sunday, about sermon-time, August the Ninth, 1573, at what time the newes of our captaine's returne brought unto his" (people?) "did so speedily pass over all the church, and surpass their mindes with desire and delight to see him, that very fewe or none remained with the preacher, all hastening to see the evidence of God's love and blessing towards our gracious Queene and countrey, by the fruite of our captaine's labour and successe. Soli Deo gloria."

I am curious to know, and hope to find, that the deserted preacher was Mr. Philip Nichols, the compiler afterwards of this log-book of Sir Francis.

Putting out of the question, then, this mode of their livelihood, you will find all these squires essentially "captaines," head, or chief persons, occupied in maintaining good order, and putting things to rights, so that they naturally become chief Lawyers without Wigs, (otherwise called Kings,) in the districts accessible to them. Of whom I have named first, the Athenian Theseus, "setter to rights," or "settler," his name means; he being both the founder of the first city whose history you are to know, and the first true Ruler of beasts: for his mystic contest with the Minotaur is the fable

through which the Greeks taught what they knew of the more terrible and mysterious relations between the lower creatures and man; and the desertion of him by Ariadne, (for indeed he never deserted her, but she him,—involuntarily, poor sweet maid,—Death calling her in Diana's name,) is the conclusive stroke against him by the Third Fors.

Of this great squire, then, you shall really have some account in next letter. I have only further time now to tell you that this letter's frontispiece is a facsimile of two separate parts of an engraving originally executed by Sandro Botticelli. An impression of Sandro's own plate is said to exist in the Vatican; I have never seen one. The ordinarily extant impressions are assuredly from an inferior plate, a copy of Botticelli's. But his manner of engraving has been imitated by the copyist as far as he understood it, and the important qualities of the design are so entirely preserved that the work has often been assigned to the master himself.

It represents the seven works of Mercy, as completed by an eighth work in the centre of all; namely, lending without interest, from the Mount of Pity accumulated by generous alms. In the upper part of the design are seen the shores of Italy, with the cities which first built Mounts of Pity: Venice, chief of all;—then Florence, Genoa, and Castruccio's Lucca; in the distance prays the monk of Ancona, who first thought—inspired of heaven—of such war with usurers; and an angel crowns him, as you see.

The little dashes, which form the dark background, represent waves of the Adriatic; and they, as well as all the rest, are rightly and manfully engraved, though you may not think it; but I have no time to-day to give you a lecture on engraving, nor to tell you the story of Mounts of Pity, which is too pretty to be spoiled by haste; but I hope to get something of Theseus and Frederick the Second, preparatorily, into next letter. Meantime I must close this one by answering two requests, which, though made to me privately, I think it right to state my reasons for refusing, publicly.

The first was indeed rather the offer of an honour to me, than a request, in the proposal that I should contribute to the Maurice Memorial Fund.

I loved Mr. Maurice, learned much from him, worked under his guidance and authority, and have deep regard and respect for some persons whose names I see on the Memorial Committee.

But I must decline joining them; first, because I dislike all memorials, as such; thinking that no man who deserves them, needs them: and secondly, because, though I affectionately remember and honour Mr. Maurice, I have no mind to put his bust in Westminster Abbey. For I do not think of him as one of the great, or even one of the leading, men of the England of his day; but only as the centre of a group of students whom his amiable sentimentalism at once exalted and stimulated, while it relieved them from any painful

necessities of exact scholarship in divinity. And as he was always honest, (at least in intention,) and unfailingly earnest and kind, he was harmless and soothing in error, and vividly helpful when unerring. I have above referred you, and most thankfully, to his sermon on the relations of man to inferior creatures; and I can quite understand how pleasant it was for a disciple panic-struck by the literal aspect of the doctrine of justification by faith, to be told, in an earlier discourse, that "We speak of an anticipation as justified by the event. Supposing that anticipation to be something so inward, so essential to me, that my own very existence is involved in it, *I* am justified by it." But consolatory equivocations of this kind have no enduring place in literature; nor has Mr. Maurice more real right to a niche in Westminster Abbey than any other tender-hearted Christian gentleman, who has successfully, for a time, promoted the charities of his faith, and parried its discussion.

I have been also asked to contribute to the purchase of the Alexandra Park; and I will not: and beg you, my working readers, to understand, once for all, that I wish your *homes* to be comfortable, and refined; and that I will resist, to the utmost of my power, all schemes founded on the vile modern notion that you are to be crowded in kennels till you are nearly dead, that other people may make money by your work, and then taken out in squads by tramway and railway, to be revived and refined by science and art. Your

first business is to make your homes healthy and delightful: then, keep your wives and children there, and let your return to *them* be your daily "holy day."

Ever faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

THESEUS

*With the Symbol of his Life-problem.*

*Thus drawn by a* MASTER OF THE MINT IN CRETE.

# LETTER XXIII

*THE LABYRINTH*

BRANTWOOD,
*October 24th*, 1872.

MY FRIENDS,—

AT breakfast this morning, which I was eating sulkily, because I had final press-corrections to do on 'Fors,' (and the last are always worst to do, being without repentance,) I took up the *Pall Mall Gazette* for the 21st, and chanced on two things, of which one much interested, the other much pleased me, and both are to our present purpose.

What interested me was the statement in the column of "This Evening's News," made by a gentleman much acquainted with naval business, that "Mr. Goschen is the one man to whom, and to whom alone, we can as a nation look even for permission to retain our power at sea."

Whether entirely, or, as I apprehend, but partially, true, this statement is a remarkable one to appear in the journals of a nation which has occupied its mind lately chiefly on the subject of its liberties; and I cannot but wonder what Sir Francis Drake would have thought of such a piece of Evening's News, communicated in form to *him?*

What he would have thought—if you can fancy

it—would be very proper for you also to think, and much to our eventual purpose. But the part of the contents of the *Pall Mall* which I found to bear on the subject of this letter, was the address by a mangled convict to a benevolent gentleman. The Third Fors must assuredly have determined that this letter should be pleasing to the Touchstone mind,—the gods will have it poetical; it ends already with rhyme, and must begin in like manner, for these first twelve verses of the address are much too precious to be lost among "news," whether of morning or evening.

"Mr. P. Taylor, honnered Sir,
Accept these verses I indict,
Thanks to a gentle mother dear
Which taught these infant hands to rite.

"And thanks unto the Chaplin here,
A heminent relidjous man,
As kind a one as ever dipt
A beke into the flowing can.

"He pointed out to me most clear
How sad and sinfull is my ways,
And numerous is the briney tear
Which for that man I nigtly prays.

"'Cohen,' he ses, in sech a voice!
'Your lot is hard, your stripes is sore;
But Cohen,' he ses, 'rejoice! rejoice!
And never never steale no more!'

"His langwidge is so kind and good,
It works so strong on me inside,
I woold not do it if I coold,
I coold not do it if I tryed.

"Ah, wence this moisteur in my eye?
Whot makes me turn agin my food?
O, Mister Taylor, arsk not why,
Ime so cut up with gratitood.

"Fansy a gentleman like you,
No paultry Beak, but a M.P.,
A riggling in your heasy chair
The riggles they put onto me.

"I see thee shudderin ore thy wine,—
You hardly know what you are at,
Whenere you think of Us emplyin
The bloody and unhenglish Cat.

"Well may your indigernation rise!
I call it Manley what you feeled
At seein Briton's n-k-d b-cks
By brutial jalors acked and weald.

"Habolish these yere torchiers!
Dont have no horgies any more
Of arf a dozen orficers
All wallerin in a fellers goar.

"Imprisonment alone is not
A thing of whitch we would complane;
Add ill-conwenience to our lot,
But do not give the convick pain.

"And well you know that's not the wust,
Not if you went and biled us whole;
The Lash's degeradation!—that's
What cuts us to the wery soul!"

The questions respecting punishment and reformation, which these verses incidentally propose, are precisely the same which had to be determined three thousand years ago in the city of Athens—(the only

difference of any importance being that the instrument of execution discussed was club instead of cat); and their determination gave rise to the peculiar form in which the history of the great Athenian Squire, Theseus,—our to-day's subject—was presented to mankind.

The story is a difficult one to tell, and a more difficult one still to understand. The likeness, or imagined likeness, of the hero himself, as the Greeks fancied him, you may see, when you care to do so, at the British Museum, in simple guise enough.

Miss Edgeworth, in her noble last novel, 'Helen,' makes *her* hero fly into a passion at even being suspected of wishing to quote the too trite proverb that "No man is a hero to his valet-de-chambre." But Mr. Beauclerk disclaims it for its triteness only, when he ought rather to have disclaimed it for its untruth. Every truly great man that ever I heard of, was a principal hero to his servants, and most heroic to those most intimate with him. At all events, the Greeks meant all the world to be to their hero as valets-de-chambre, for he sits mother-naked. Under which primitive aspect, indeed, I would fain show you, mentally as well as bodily, every hero I give you account of. It is the modern method, in order to give you more inviting pictures of people, to dress them—often very correctly—in the costume of the time, with such old clothes as the masquerade shops keep. But my own steady aim is to strip them for you, that you may see if they are of flesh, indeed, or dust. Similarly, I shall try

to strip theories bare, and facts, such as you need to know.

Mother-naked sits Theseus: and around about him, not much more veiled, ride his Athenians, in Pan-Athenaic procession, honouring their Queen-Goddess. Admired, beyond all other marble shapes in the world; for which reason, the gentlemen of my literary club here in London, professing devotion to the same goddess, decorate their very comfortable corner house in Pall Mall with a copy of this Attic sculpture.

Being therein, themselves, Attic in no wise, but essentially barbarous, pilfering what they cannot imitate: for a truly Attic mind would have induced them to pourtray *themselves*, as they appear in their own Pan-Christian procession, whenever and wherever it may be:—presumably, to Epsom downs on the Derby day.

You may see, I said, the statue of Theseus whenever you care to do so. I do not in the least know why you *should* care. But for years back, you, or your foolish friends, have been making a mighty fuss to get yourselves into the British Museum on Sundays: so I suppose you want to see the Theseus, or the stuffed birds, or the crabs and spiders, or the skeleton of the gorilla, or the parched alligator-skins; and you imagine these contemplations likely to improve, and sanctify, that is to say, recreate, your minds.

But are you quite sure you have got any minds yet to be recreated? Before you expect edification

from that long gallery full of long-legged inconceivable spiders, and colossal blotchy crabs, did you ever think of looking with any mind, or mindfulness, at the only too easily conceivable short-legged spider of your own English acquaintance? or did you ever so much as consider why the crabs on Margate sands were minded to go sideways instead of straightforward? Have you so much as watched a spider making his cobweb, or, if you have not yet had leisure to do that, in the toil of your own cobweb-making, did you ever *think* how he threw his first thread across the corner?

No need for you to go to the British Museum yet, my friends, either on Sundays or any other day.

"Well, but the Greek sculpture? We can't see *that* at home in our room corners."

And what is Greek sculpture, or any sculpture, to you? Are your own legs and arms not handsome enough for you to look at, but you must go and stare at chipped and smashed bits of stone in the likenesses of legs and arms that ended their walks and work two thousand years ago?

"Your own legs and arms are not as handsome as —you suppose they ought to be," say you?

No; I fancy not: and you will not make them handsomer by sauntering with your hands in your pockets through the British Museum. I suppose you will have an agitation, next, for leave to smoke in it. Go and walk in the fields on Sunday, making sure, first, therefore, that you have fields to walk in: look at living birds, not at stuffed ones; and

make your own breasts and shoulders better worth seeing than the Elgin Marbles.

Which to effect, remember, there are several matters to be thought of. The shoulders will get strong by exercise. So indeed will the breast. But the breast chiefly needs exercise *inside* of it—of the lungs, namely, and of the heart; and this last exercise is very curiously inconsistent with many of the athletic exercises of the present day. And the reason I do want you, for once, to go to the British Museum, and to look at that broad chest of Theseus, is that the Greeks imagined it to have something better than a Lion's Heart beneath its breadth—a hero's heart, duly trained in every pulse.

They imagined it so. Your modern extremely wise and liberal historians will tell you it never was so:—that no real Theseus ever existed then; and that none can exist now, or, rather, that everybody is himself a Theseus and a little more.

All the more strange then, all the more instructive, as the disembodied Cincinnatus of the Roman, so this disembodied Theseus of the Ionian; though certainly Mr. Stuart Mill could not consider him, even in that ponderous block of marble imagery, a "utility fixed and embodied in a material object." Not even a disembodied utility—not even a ghost—if he never lived. An idea only; yet one that has ruled all minds of men to this hour, from the hour of its first being born, a dream, into this practical and solid world.

Ruled, and still rules, in a thousand ways, which

you know no more than the paths by which the winds have come that blow in your face. But you never pass a day without being brought, somehow, under the power of Theseus.

You cannot pass a china-shop, for instance, nor an upholsterer's, without seeing, on some mug or plate, or curtain, or chair, the pattern known as the "Greek fret," simple or complex. I once held it in especial dislike, as the chief means by which bad architects tried to make their buildings look classical; and as ugly in itself. Which it is: and it has an ugly meaning also; but a deep one, which I did not then know; having been obliged to write too young, when I knew only half truths, and was eager to set them forth by what I thought fine words. People used to call me a good writer then; now they say I can't write at all; because, for instance, if I think anybody's house is on fire, I only say, "Sir, your house is on fire;" whereas formerly I used to say, "Sir, the abode in which you probably passed the delightful days of youth is in a state of inflammation," and everybody used to like the effect of the two p's in "probably passed," and of the two d's in "delightful days."

Well, that Greek fret, ugly in itself, has yet definite and noble service in decorative work, as black has among colours; much more, has it a significance, very precious, though very solemn, when you can read it.

There is so much in it, indeed, that I don't well know where to begin. Perhaps it will be best to

go back to our cathedral door at Lucca, where we have been already. For as, after examining the sculpture on the bell, with the help of the sympathetic ringer, I was going in to look at the golden lamp, my eyes fell on a slightly traced piece of sculpture and legend on the southern wall of the porch, which, partly feeling it out with my finger, it being worn away by the friction of many passing shoulders, broad and narrow, these six hundred years and more, I drew for you, and Mr. Burgess has engraved.

The straggling letters at the side, read straight, and with separating of the words, run thus :—

HIC QVEM CRETICVS EDIT DEDALVS EST LABERINTHVS.
DE QVO NVLLVS VADERE QVIVIT QVI FVIT INTVS
NI THESEVS GRATIS ADRIANE STAMINE JVTVS.

which is in English :—

This is the labyrinth which the Cretan Dedalus built,
Out of which nobody could get who was inside,
Except Theseus ; nor could he have done it, unless he had been helped with a thread by Adriane, all for love.

Upon which you are to note, first, that the grave announcement, "This is the labyrinth which the Cretan Dedalus built," may possibly be made interesting even to some of your children, if reduced from mediæval sublimity, into your more popular legend—"This is the house that Jack built." The cow with the crumpled horn will then remind them of the creature who, in the midst of this labyrinth, lived as a spider in the centre of his web; and

the "maiden all forlorn" may stand for Ariadne, or Adriane—(either name is given her by Chaucer,

as he chooses to have three syllables or two)—while the gradual involution of the ballad, and

necessity of clear-mindedness as well as clear utterance on the part of its singer, is a pretty vocal imitation of the deepening labyrinth. Theseus, being a pious hero, and the first Athenian knight who cut his hair short in front, may not inaptly be represented by the priest all shaven and shorn; the cock that crew in the morn is the proper Athenian symbol of a pugnacious mind; and the malt that lay in the house fortunately indicates the connection of Theseus and the Athenian power with the mysteries of Eleusis, where corn first, it is said, grew in Greece. And by the way, I am more and more struck every day, by the singular Grecism in Shakespeare's mind, contrary in many respects to the rest of his nature; yet compelling him to associate English fairyland with the great Duke of Athens, and to use the most familiar of all English words for land, "acre," in the Greek or Eleusinian sense, not the English one!

> "Between the acres of the rye,
> These pretty country-folks do lie—"

and again—"search every acre in the high grown field," meaning "ridge," or "crest," not "ager," the root of "agriculture." Lastly, in our nursery rhyme, observe that the name of Jack, the builder, stands excellently for Dædalus, retaining the idea of him down to the phrase, "Jack-of-all-Trades." Of this Greek builder you will find some account at the end of my 'Aratra Pentelici:' to-day I can only tell you he is distinctively the power of finest

human, as opposed to Divine, workmanship or craftsmanship. Whatever good there is, and whatever evil, in the labour of the hands, separated from that of the soul, is exemplified by his history and performance. In the deepest sense, he was to the Greeks, Jack of all trades, yet Master of none; the real Master of every trade being always a God. His own special work or craft was inlaying or dovetailing, and especially of black in white.

And this house which he built was his finest piece of involution, or cunning workmanship; and

the memory of it is kept by the Greeks for ever afterwards, in that running border of theirs, involved in and repeating itself, called the Greek fret, of which you will at once recognise the character in these two pictures of the labyrinth of Dædalus itself, on the coins of the place where it was built, Cnossus, in the island of Crete; and which you see, in the frontispiece, surrounding the head of Theseus, himself, on a coin of the same city.

Of course frets and returning lines were used in ornamentation when there were no labyrinths —

probably long before labyrinths. A symbol is scarcely ever invented just when it is needed. Some already recognized and accepted form or thing becomes symbolic at a particular time. Horses had tails, and the moon quarters, long before there were Turks; but the horse-tail and crescent are not less definitely symbolic to the Ottoman. So, the early forms of ornament are nearly alike, among all nations of any capacity for design: they put meaning into them afterwards, if they ever come themselves to *have* any meaning. Vibrate but the point of a tool against an unbaked vase, as it revolves, set on the wheel,—you have a wavy or zigzag line. The vase revolves once; the ends of the wavy line do not exactly tally when they meet; you get over the blunder by turning one into a head, the other into a tail,—and have a symbol of eternity—if, first, which is wholly needful, you have an *idea* of eternity!

Again, the free sweep of a pen at the finish of a large letter has a tendency to throw itself into a spiral. There is no particular intelligence, or spiritual emotion, in the production of this line. A worm draws it with his coil, a fern with its bud, and a periwinkle with his shell. Yet, completed in the Ionic capital, and arrested in the bending point of the acanthus leaf in the Corinthian one, it has become the primal element of beautiful architecture and ornament in all the ages; and is eloquent with endless symbolism, representing the power of the winds and waves in Athenian work, and of the old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, in Gothic

work: or, indeed, often enough, of both, the Devil being held prince of the power of the air—as in the story of Job, and the lovely story of Buonconte of Montefeltro, in Dante: nay, in this very tale of Theseus, as Chaucer tells it,—having got hold, by ill luck, only of the later and calumnious notion that Theseus deserted his saviour-mistress, he wishes him Devil-speed instead of God-speed, and that energetically—

"A twenty-divel way the wind him drive."

For which, indeed, Chaucer somewhat deserved (for he ought not to have believed such things of Theseus,) the God of Love's anger at his drawing too near the daisy. I will write the pretty lines partly in modern spelling for you, that you may get the sense better:—

"I, kneeling by this flower, in good intent,
Abode, to know what all the people meant,
As still as any stone; till at the last
The God of Love on me his eyen cast
And said, 'Who kneeleth there?' And I answered
Unto his asking,
And said, 'Sir, it am I,' and came him near
And salued him.—Quoth he, 'What dost thou here
So nigh mine own flower, so boldly?
It were better worthy, truly,
A worm to nighen near my flower than thou.'
'And why, Sir,' quoth I, 'an it like you?'
'For thou,' quoth he, 'art nothing thereto able,
It is my relike, digne, and delitable.
And thou my foe, and all my folk worriest.*
And of mine old servants thou missayest.'"

* Chaucer's real word means "warrest with all my folk;" but it was so closely connected with "weary" and "worry" in association of sound, in his days, that I take the last as nearest the sense.

But it is only for evil speaking of ladies that Chaucer felt his conscience thus pricked,—chiefly of Cressida; whereas, I have written the lines for you because it is the very curse of this age that we speak evil alike of ladies and knights, and all that made them noble in past days;—nay, of saints also; and I have, for first business, next January, to say what I can for our own St. George, against the enlightened modern American view of him, that he was nothing better than a swindling bacon-seller (good enough, indeed, so, for us, *now!*)

But to come back to the house that Jack built. You will want to know, next, whether Jack ever *did* build it. I believe, in veritable bricks and mortar — no; in veritable limestone and cave-catacomb, perhaps, yes; it is no matter how; *somehow*, you see, Jack must have built it, for there is the picture of it on the coin of the town. He built it, just as St. George killed the dragon; so that you put a picture of him also on the coin of *your* town.

Not but that the real and artful labyrinth might have been, for all we know. A very real one, indeed, was built by twelve brotherly kings in Egypt, in two stories, one for men to live in, the other for crocodiles;—and the upper story was visible and wonderful to all eyes, in authentic times: whereas, we know of no one who ever saw Jack's labyrinth: and yet, curiously enough, the real labyrinth set the pattern of nothing; while Jack's ghostly labyrinth has set the pattern of almost everything linear and

complex, since; and the pretty spectre of it blooms at this hour, in vital hawthorn for you, every spring, at Hampton Court.

Now, in the pictures of this imaginary maze, you are to note that both the Cretan and Lucchese designs agree in being composed of a single path or track, coiled, and recoiled, on itself. Take a piece of flexible chain and lay it down, considering the chain itself as the path: and, without an interruption, it will trace any of the three figures. (The two Cretan ones are indeed the same in design, except in being, one square, and the other round.) And recollect, upon this, that the word "Labyrinth" properly means "rope-walk, or "coil-of-rope-walk," its first syllable being probably also the same as our English name "Laura," 'the path,' and its method perfectly given by Chaucer in the single line—"And, for the house is crenkled to and fro." And on this, note farther, first, that *had* the walls been real, instead of ghostly, there would have been no difficulty whatever in getting either out or in, for you could go no other way. But if the walls were spectral, and yet the transgression of them made your final entrance or return impossible, Ariadne's clue was needful indeed.

Note, secondly, that the question seems not at all to have been about getting in; but getting *out* again. The clue, at all events, could be helpful only after you had carried it in; and if the spider, or other monster in midweb, ate you, the help in your clue, for return, would be insignificant. So

that this thread of Ariadne's implied that even victory over the monster would be vain, unless you could disentangle yourself from his web also.

So much you may gather from coin or carving: next, we try tradition. Theseus, as I said before, is the great settler or law-giver of the Athenian state; but he is so eminently as the Peace-maker, causing men to live in fellowship who before lived separate, and making roads passable that were infested by robbers or wild beasts. He is the exterminator of every bestial and savage element, and the type of human, or humane power, which power you will find in this, and all my other books on policy, summed in the terms, "Gentleness and Justice." The Greeks dwelt chiefly in their thoughts on the last, and Theseus, representing the first, has therefore most difficulty in dealing with questions of punishment, and criminal justice.

Now the justice of the Greeks was enforced by three great judges, who lived in three islands. Æacus, who lived in the island of Ægina, is the administrator of distributive, or 'dividing' justice; which relates chiefly to property, and his subjects, as being people of industrious temper, were once ants; afterwards called Ant-people, or 'Myrmidons.'

Secondly, Minos, who lived in the island of Crete, was the judge who punished crime, of whom presently; finally, Rhadamanthus, called always by Homer "golden," or "glowing" Rhadamanthus, was the judge who rewarded virtue; and he lived in a blessed island covered with flowers, but which

eye of man hath not yet seen, nor has any living ear heard lisp of wave on that shore.

For the very essence and primal condition of virtue is that it shall not know of, nor believe in, any blessed islands, till it find them, it may be, in due time.

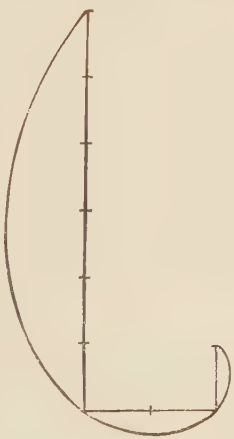
And of these three judges, two were architects, but the third only a gardener. Æacus helped the gods to build the walls of Troy. Minos appointed the labyrinth in coils round the Minotaur; but Rhadamanthus only set trees, with golden fruit on them, beside waters of comfort, and overlaid the calm waves with lilies.

They *did* these things, I tell you, in very truth, cloud-hidden indeed; but the things themselves are with us to this day. No town on earth is more real than that town of Troy. Her prince, long ago, was dragged dead round the walls that Æacus built; but her princedom did not die with him. Only a few weeks since, I was actually standing, as I told you, with my good friend Mr. Parker, watching the lizards play among the chinks in the walls built by Æacus, for his wandering Trojans, by Tiber side. And, perhaps within memory of man, some of you may have walked up or down Tower Street, little thinking that its tower was also built by Æacus, for his wandering Trojans and their Cæsar, by Thames side: and on Tower Hill itself—where I had my pocket picked only the other day by some of the modern Æacidæ—stands the English Mint, "dividing" gold and silver which Æacus, first of all Greeks,

divided in his island of Ægina, and struck into intelligible money-stamp and form, that men might render to Cæsar the things which *are* Cæsar's.

But the Minos labyrinth is more real yet; at all events, more real for *us*. And what it was, and is, as you have seen at Lucca, you shall hear at Florence, where you are to learn Dante's opinion upon it, and Sandro Botticelli shall draw it for us.

That Hell, which so many people think the only place Dante gives any account of, (yet seldom know his account even of that,) was, he tells you, divided into upper, midmost, and nether pits. You usually lose sight of this main division of it, in the more complex one of the nine circles; but remember, these are divided in diminishing proportion: six of them are the upper hell; two, the midmost; one, the lowest.* You will find this a very pretty and curious proportion. Here it is in labyrinthine form, putting the three dimensions at right angles to each other, and drawing



* The deepening orders of sin, in the nine circles, are briefly these,—1. Unredeemed nature; 2. Lust; 3. Gluttony; 4. Avarice; 5. Discontent; 6. Heresy; 7. Open violence; 8. Fraudful violence; 9. Treachery. But they are curiously dove-tailed together,—serpent-tailed, I should say,—by closer coil, not expanding plume. You shall understand the joiner's work next month.

a spiral round them. I show you it in a spiral line, because the idea of descent is in Dante's mind, spiral (as of a worm's or serpent's coil) throughout; even to the mode of Geryon's flight, "*ruota* e discende;" and Minos accordingly indicates which circle any sinner is to be sent to, in a most graphically labyrinthine manner, by twisting his tail round himself so many times, necessarily thus marking the level.

The uppermost and least dreadful hell, divided into six circles, is the hell of those who cannot rightly govern themselves, but have no mind to do mischief to any one else. In the lowest circle of this, and within the same walls with the more terrible mid-hell, whose stench even comes up and reaches to them, are people who have not rightly governed their *thoughts:* and these are buried for ever in fiery tombs, and their thoughts thus governed to purpose; which you, my friends, who are so fond of freedom of thought, and freedom of the press, may wisely meditate on.

Then the two lower hells are for those who have wilfully done mischief to other people. And of these, some do open injury, and some, deceitful injury, and of these the rogues are put the lower; but there is a greater distinction in the manner of sin, than its simplicity or roguery:—namely, whether it be done in hot blood or cold blood. The injurious sins, done in hot blood—that is to say, under the influence of passion—are in the midmost hell; but the sins done in cold blood, without passion, or, more accurately, contrary to passion, far down

*below* the freezing point, are put in the lowest hell: the ninth circle.

Now, little as you may think it, or as the friend thought it, who tried to cure me of jesting the other day, I should not have taken upon me to write this 'Fors,' if I had not, in some degree, been cured of jesting long ago; and in the same way that Dante was,—for in my poor and faltering path I have myself been taken far enough down among the diminished circles to see this nether hell—the hell of Traitors; and to know, what people do not usually know of treachery, that it is not the fraud, but the *cold-heartedness*, which is chiefly dreadful in it. Therefore, this nether Hell is of ice, not fire; and of ice that nothing can break.

"Oh, ill-starred folk,
Beyond all others wretched, who abide
In such a mansion as scarce thought finds words
To speak of, better had ye here on earth
Been flocks or mountain goats.
* * * * *
I saw, before, and underneath my feet,
A lake, whose frozen surface liker seemed
To glass than water. Not so thick a veil
In winter e'er hath Austrian Danube spread
O'er his still course, nor Tanais, far remote
Under the chilling sky. Rolled o'er that mass
Had Taberniche or Pietrapana fallen
Not even its rim had creaked.
As peeps the frog,
Croaking above the wave,—what time in dreams
The village gleaner oft pursues her toil,—
Blue-pinched, and shrined in ice, the spirits stood,
Moving their teeth in shrill note, like the stork."

No more wandering of the feet in labyrinth like this, and the eyes, once cruelly tearless, now blind with frozen tears. But the midmost hell, for hot-blooded sinners, has other sort of lakes,—as, for instance, you saw a little while ago, of hot pitch, in which one bathes otherwise than in Serchio—(the Serchio is the river at Lucca, and Pietrapana a Lucchese mountain). But observe,—for here we get to our main work again,—the great boiling lake on the Phlegethon of this upper hell country is *red*, not black; and its source, as well as that of the river which freezes beneath, is in this island of Crete! in the Mount Ida, "joyous once with leaves and streams." You must look to the passage yourselves—'Inferno,' XIV. (line 120 in Carey)—for I have not room for it now. The first sight of it, to Dante, is as "a little brook, whose crimsoned wave Yet lifts my hair with horror." Virgil makes him look at this spring as the notablest thing seen by him in hell, since he entered its gate; but the great lake of it is under a ruinous mountain, like the fallen Alp through which the Adige foams down to Verona;—and on the crest of this ruin lies couched the enemy of Theseus—the Minotaur:

> "And there,
> At point of the disparted ridge, lay stretched
> The infamy of Crete—at sight of us
> It gnawed itself, *as one with rage distract.*
> To him my guide exclaimed, 'Perchance thou deem'st
> The King of Athens here.'"

Of whom and of his enemy, I have time to tell you

no more to-day—except only that this Minotaur is the type or embodiment of the two essentially bestial sins of Anger and Lust;—that both these are in the human nature, interwoven inextricably with its chief virtue, Love, so that Dante makes this very ruin of the Rocks of hell, on which the Minotaur is couched, to be wrought on them at the instant when "the Universe was thrilled with love," —(the last moment of the Crucifixion)—and that the labyrinth of these passions is one not fabulous, nor only pictured on coins of Crete. And the right interweaving of Anger with Love, in criminal justice, is the main question in earthly law, which the Athenian lawgiver had to deal with. Look, if you can, at my introductory Lectures at Oxford, § 89; and so I must leave Theseus for this time; —in next letter, which will be chiefly on Christmas cheer, I must really try to get as far as his vegetable soup.

As for Æacus, and his coining business, we must even let them alone now, till next year; only I have to thank some readers who have written to me on the subject of interest of money, (one or two complaining that I had dismissed it too summarily, when, alas! I am only at the threshold of it!), and, especially, my reader for the press, who has referred me to a delightful Italian book, 'Teoremi di Politica Cristiana,' (Naples, 1830,) and copied out ever so much of it for me; and Mr. Sillar, for farther most useful letters, of which to-day I can only quote this postscript:—

"Please note that your next number of 'Fors Clavigera' ought to be in the hands of your readers on Friday, the 1st, or Saturday, the 2nd, of November. The following day being Sunday, the 3rd, there will be read in every church in England, or in the world, where the Church Service is used, the 15th Psalm, which distinctly declares the man who shall ascend to God's holy hill to be him who, amongst other things, has not put forth his money upon usury; a verse impiously ignored in most of the metrical versions of the Psalms; those adapted to popular tunes or popular prejudices."

I think, accordingly, that some of my readers may be glad to have a sounder version of that Psalm; and as the 14th is much connected with it, and will be variously useful to us afterwards, here they both are, done into verse by an English squire,—or his sister, for they alike could rhyme; and the last finished singing what her brother left unsung, the Third Fors having early put seal on his lips.

PSALM XIV.—(*Dixit insipiens.*)

THE foolish man by flesh and fancy ledd,
His guilty hart with this fond thought hath fed:
There is noe God that raigneth.

And so thereafter he and all his mates
Do workes, which earth corrupt, and Heaven hates:
Not one that good remaineth.

Even God himself sent down his piercing ey,
If of this clayy race he could espy
One, that his wisdome learneth.

And loe, he findes that all a strayeng went:
All plung'd in stincking filth, not one well bent,
Not one that God discerneth.

O maddnes of these folkes, thus loosly ledd!
These caniballs, who, as if they were bread,
Gods people do devower:

Nor ever call on God; but they shall quake
More than they now do bragg, when he shall take
The just into his power.

Indeede the poore, opprest by you, you mock:
Their councells are your common jesting stock:
But God is their recomfort.

Ah, when from Syon shall the Saver come,
That Jacob, freed by thee, may glad become
And Israel full of comfort?

PSALM XV.—(*Domine, quis habitabit.*)

In tabernacle thine, O Lord, who shall remaine?
Lord, of thy holy hill, who shall the rest obtaine?
Ev'n he that leades a life of uncorrupted traine
Whose deedes of righteous hart, whose harty wordes
be plain:

Who with deceitfull tongue hath never us'd to faine;
Nor neighboure hurtes by deede, nor doth with
slander stain:
Whose eyes a person vile doth hold in vile disdaine,
But doth, with honour greate, the godly entertaine:
Who othe and promise given doth faithfully maintain,
Although some worldly losse thereby he may sustain;
From bityng usury who ever doth refraine:
Who sells not guiltlesse cause for filthy love of gain,
Who thus proceedes for ay, in sacred mount shall
raign.

You may not like this old English at first; but if you can find anybody to read it to you who has an ear, its cadence is massy and grand, more than that of most verse I know, and never a word is lost. Whether you like it or not, the sense of it is true, and the way to the sacred mount, (of which mounts, whether of Pity, or of Roses, are but shadows,) told you for once, straightforwardly,—on which road I wish you God-speed.

Ever faithfully yours,

JOHN RUSKIN.

"WE HAVE SEEN HIS STAR IN THE EAST"

*Painted by* BERNARD OF LUINO, *at* MILAN.

## LETTER XXIV

### *THE CRADLE SONG*

CORPUS CHRISTI COLL.,

MY FRIENDS,— *November 7th*, 1872.

I SHALL not call you so any more, after this Christmas; first, because things have chanced to me, of late, which have made me too sulky to be friends with anybody; secondly, because in the two years during which I have been writing these letters, not one of you has sent me a friendly word of answer; lastly, because, even if you *were* my friends, it would be waste print to call you so, once a month. Nor shall I sign myself "faithfully yours" any more; being very far from faithfully my own, and having found most other people anything but faithfully mine. Nor shall I sign my name, for I never like the look of it; being, I apprehend, only short for "Rough Skin," in the sense of "Pigskin"; (and indeed, the planet under which I was born, Saturn, has supreme power over pigs,)—nor can I find historical mention of any other form of the name, except one I made no reference to when it occurred, as that of the leading devil of four,—Red-skin, Blue-skin—and I forget the skins of the other two—who performed in a religious play, of the

fourteenth century, which was nearly as comic as the religious earnest of our own century. So that the letters will begin henceforward without address; and close without signature. You will probably know whom they come from, and I don't in the least care whom they go to.

I was in London, all day yesterday, where the weather was as dismal as is its wont; and, returning here by the evening train, saw, with astonishment, the stars extricate themselves from the fog, and the moon glow for a little while in her setting, over the southern Berkshire hills, as I breathed on the platform at the Reading station;—(for there were six people in the carriage, and they had shut both the windows).

When I got to Oxford, the sky was entirely clear; the Great Bear was near the ground under the pole, and the Charioteer high over-head, the principal star of him as bright as a gas-lamp.

It is a curious default in the stars, to my mind, that there is a Charioteer among them without a chariot; and a Waggon with no waggoner; nor any waggon, for that matter, except the Bear's stomach; but I have always wanted to know the history of the absent Charles, who must have stopped, I suppose to drink, while his cart went on, and so never got to be stellified himself. I wish I knew; but I can tell you less about him than even about Theseus. The Charioteer's story is pretty, however:—he gave his life for a kiss, and did not get it; got made into stars instead. It would be a dainty tale to tell you

under the mistletoe: perhaps I may have time next year: to-day it is of the stars of Ariadne's crown I want to speak.

But that giving one's life for a kiss, and not getting it, is indeed a general abstract of the Greek notion of heroism, and its reward; and, by the way, does it not seem to you a grave defect in the stars, at Christmas time, that all their stories are Greek —not one Christian? In all the east, and all the west, there is not a space of heaven with a Christian story in it; the star of the Wise Men having risen but once, and set, it seems, for ever: and the stars of Foolish men—innumerable, but unintelligible, forming, I suppose, all across the sky that broad way of Asses' milk; while a few Greek heroes and hunters, a monster or two, and some crustaceous animals, occupy, here in the north, our heaven's compass, down to the very margin of the illuminated book. A sky quite good enough for us, nevertheless, for all the use we make of it, either by night or day —or any hope we have of getting into it—or any inclination we have, while still out of it, to "take stars for money."

Yet, with all deference to George Herbert, I will take them for nothing of the sort. Money is an entirely pleasant and proper thing to have, itself; and the first shilling I ever got in my life, I put in a pill-box, and put it under my pillow, and couldn't sleep all night for satisfaction. I couldn't have done that with a star; though truly the pretty system of usury makes the stars drop down something else

than dew. I got a note from an arithmetical friend the other day, speaking of the death of "an old lady, a cousin of mine—who left—*left*, because she could not take it with her—£200,000. On calculation, I found this old lady, who has been lying bedridden for a year, was accumulating money (*i.e.* the results of other people's labour,) at the rate of 4d. a minute; in other words, she awoke in the morning ten pounds richer than she went to bed." At which, doubtless, and the like miracles throughout the world, "the stars with deep amaze, stand fixed with steadfast gaze;" for this is, indeed, a Nativity of an adverse god to the one you profess to honour, with them, and the angels, at Christmas, by over-eating yourselves.

I suppose that is the quite essential part of the religion of Christmas; and, indeed, it is about the most religious thing you do in the year; and if pious people would understand, generally, that, if there be indeed any other God than Mammon, He likes to see people comfortable, and nicely dressed, as much as Mammon likes to see them fasting and in rags, they might set a wiser example to everybody than they do. I am frightened out of my wits, every now and then, here at Oxford, by seeing something come out of poor people's houses, all dressed in black down to the ground; which, (having been much thinking of wicked things lately,) I at first take for the Devil, and then find, to my extreme relief and gratification, that it's a Sister of Charity. Indeed, the only serious disadvantage of

cating, and fine dressing, considered as religious ceremonies, whether at Christmas, or on Sunday, in the Sunday dinner and Sunday gown,—is that you don't always clearly understand what the eating and dressing signify. For example: why should Sunday be kept otherwise than Christmas, and be less merry? Because it is a day of rest, commemorating the fulfilment of God's easy work, while Christmas is a day of toil, commemorating the beginning of His difficult work? Is that the reason? Or because Christmas commemorates His stooping to thirty years of sorrow, and Sunday His rising to countless years of joy? Which should be the gladdest day of the two, think you, on either ground? Why haven't you Sunday pantomimes?

It is a strait and sore question with me, for when I was a child, I lost the pleasure of some three-sevenths of my life because of Sunday; for I always had a way of looking forward to things, and a lurid shade was cast over the whole of Friday and Saturday by the horrible sense that Sunday was coming, and inevitable. Not that I was rebellious against my good mother or aunts in any wise; feeling only that we were all crushed under a relentless fate; which was indeed the fact, for neither they nor I had the least idea what Holiness meant, beyond what I find stated very clearly by Mr. David—the pious author of "The Paradezeal system of Botany, an arrangement representing the whole globe as a vast blooming and fruitful Paradise,"—that "Holiness is a knowledge of the Ho's."

My mother, indeed, never went so far as my aunt; nor carried her religion down to the ninth or glacial circle of Holiness, by giving me cold dinner; and to this day, I am apt to over-eat myself with Yorkshire pudding, in remembrance of the consolation it used to afford me at one o'clock. Good Friday, also, was partly "intermedled," as Chaucer would call it, with light and shade, because there were hot-cross-buns at breakfast, though we had to go to church afterwards. And, indeed, I observe, happening to have under my hand the account in the *Daily Telegraph* of Good Friday at the Crystal Palace, in 1870, that its observance is for your sakes also now "intermedled" similarly, with light and shade, by conscientious persons: for in that year, "whereas in former years the performances had been exclusively of a religious character, the directors had supplemented their programme with secular amusements." It was, I suppose, considered "secular" that the fountains should play (though I have noticed that natural ones persist in that profane practice on Sunday also), and accordingly, "there was a very abundant water-supply, while a brilliant sun gave many lovely prismatic effects to the fleeting and changeful spray" (not careful, even the sun, for his part, to remember how once he became "black as sackcloth of hair"). "A striking feature presented itself to view in the shape of the large and handsome pavilion of Howe and Cushing's American circus. This vast pavilion occupies the whole centre of the grand

terrace, and was gaily decorated with bunting and fringed with the show-carriages of the circus, which were bright with gilding, mirrors, portraits, and scarlet panels. The out-door amusements began" —(The English public always retaining a distinct impression that this festival was instituted in the East)—"with an Oriental procession"—(by the way, why don't we always call Wapping the Oriental end of London?)—"of fifteen camels from the circus, mounted by negroes wearing richly coloured and bespangled Eastern costume. The performances then commenced, and continued throughout the day, the attractions comprising the trained wolves, the wonderful monkeys, and the usual scenes in the circle."

"There was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour." I often wonder, myself, how long it will be, in the crucifixion afresh, which all the earth has now resolved upon, crying with more unanimous shout than ever the Jews, "Not this man, but Barabbas"—before the Ninth Hour comes.

Assuming, however, that, for the nonce, trained wolves and wonderful monkeys are proper entertainments on Good Friday, pantomimes on Boxing-day, and sermons on Sunday, have you ever considered what observance might be due to Saturday,—the day on which He "preached to the spirits in prison"? for that seems to me quite the part of the three days' work which most of us might first hope for a share in. I don't know whether any of you perceive that your spirits are in prison. I know mine is, and that I would fain have it preached to, and delivered, if it

be possible. For, however far and steep the slope may have been into the hell which you say every Sunday that you believe He descended into, there are places trenched deep enough now in all our hearts for the hot lake of Phlegethon to leak and ooze into: and the rock of their shore is no less hard than in Dante's time.

And as your winter rejoicings, if they mean anything at all, mean that you have now, at least, a chance of deliverance from that prison, I will ask you to take the pains to understand what the bars and doors of it are, as the wisest man who has yet spoken of them tells you.

There is first, observe, this great distinction in his mind between the penalties of Hell, and the joy of Paradise. The penalty is assigned to definite act of hand; the joy, to definite state of mind. It is questioned of no one, either in the Purgatory or the Paradise, what he has done; but only what evil feeling is still in his heart, or what good, when purified wholly, his nature is noble enough to receive.

On the contrary, Hell is constituted such by the one great negative state of being without Love or Fear of God;—there are no degrees of that State; but there are more or less dreadful sins which can be done in it, according to the degradation of the unredeemed Human nature. And men are judged according to their works.

To give a single instance. The punishment of the fourth circle in Hell is for the *Misuse* of Money, for having either sinfully kept it, or sinfully spent it.

But the pain in Purgatory is only for having sinfully *Loved* it: and the hymn of repentance is, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust; quicken Thou me."

Farther, and this is very notable. You might at first think that Dante's divisions were narrow and artificial, in assigning each circle to one sin only, as if every man did not variously commit many. But it is always one sin, the favourite, which destroys souls. That conquered, all others fall with it: that victorious, all others follow with it. Nevertheless, as I told you, the joiner's work, and interwoven walls of Dante's Inferno, marking double forms of sin, and there overlapping, as it were, when they meet, is one of the subtlest conditions traceable in his whole design.

Look back to the scheme I gave you in last number. The Minotaur, spirit of lust and anger, rules over the central hell. But the *sins* of lust and anger, definitely and limitedly described as such, are punished in the upper hell, in the second and fifth circles. Why is this, think you?

Have you ever noticed—enough to call it noticing seriously—the expression, "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of *the mind*"? There is one lust and one anger of the flesh only; these, all men must feel; rightly feel, if in temperance; wrongly, if in excess; but even then, not necessarily to the destruction of their souls. But there is another lust, and another anger, of the heart; and *these* are the Furies of Phlegethon—wholly ruinous. Lord of these, on the shattered rocks, lies couched the

Infamy of Crete. For when the heart, as well as the flesh, desires what it should not, and the heart, as well as the flesh, consents and kindles to its wrath, the whole man is corrupted, and his heart's blood is fed in its veins from the lake of fire.

Take for special example, this sin of usury with which we have ourselves to deal. The punishment in the fourth circle of the upper hell is on Avarice, not Usury. For a man may be utterly avaricious,—greedy of gold—in an instinctive, fleshly way, yet not corrupt his intellect. Many of the most good-natured men are misers: my first shilling in the pill-box and sleepless night did not at all mean that I was an ill-natured or illiberal boy; it *did* mean, what is true of me still, that I should have great delight in counting money, and laying it in visible heaps and rouleaux. I never part with a new sovereign without a sigh: and if it were not that I am afraid of thieves, I would positively and seriously, at this moment, turn all I have into gold of the newest, and dig a hole for it in my garden, and go and look at it every morning and evening, like the man in Æsop's Fables, or Silas Marner: and where I think thieves will not break through nor steal, I am always laying up for myself treasures upon earth, with the most eager appetite: that bit of gold and diamonds, for instance (IV. 65), and the most gilded mass-books, and such like, I can get hold of; the acquisition of a Koran, with two hundred leaves richly gilt on both sides, only three weeks since, afforded me real consolation under variously trying circumstances.

Truly, my soul cleaves to the dust of such things. But I have not so perverted my soul, nor palsied my brains, as to expect to be advantaged by that adhesion. I don't expect, because I have gathered much, to find Nature or man gathering for me more:—to find eighteenpence in my pill-box in the morning, instead of a shilling, as a "reward for continence;" or to make an income of my Koran by lending it to poor scholars. If I think a scholar can read it,—(N.B., I can't, myself,)—and would like to—and will carefully turn the leaves by the outside edge, he is welcome to read it for nothing: if he has got into the habit of turning leaves by the middle, or of wetting his finger, and shuffling up the corners, as I see my banker's clerks do with their ledgers, for no amount of money shall he read it. (Incidentally, note the essential vulgarism of doing *anything* in a hurry.)

So that my mind and brains are in fact untainted and unwarped by lust of money, and I am free in that respect from the power of the Infamy of Crete.

I used the words just above—Furies of Phlegethon. You are beginning to know something of the Fates: of the Furies also you must know something.

The pit of Dante's central hell is reserved for those who have actually committed *malicious* crime, involving mercilessness to their neighbour, or, in suicide, to themselves. But it is necessary to serpent-tail this pit with the upper hell by a district for insanity without deed; the Fury which has brought horror to the eyes, and hardness to the

heart, and yet, having possessed itself of noble persons, issues in no malicious crime. Therefore the sixth circle of the upper hell is walled in, together with the central pit, as one grievous city of the dead; and at the gates of it the warders are fiends, and the watchers Furies.

*Watchers*, observe, as sleepless. Once in their companionship,

> "Nor poppy, nor mandragora,
> Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
> Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
> Which thou owed'st yesterday."

Sleepless, and merciless; and yet in the Greek vision of them which Æschylus wrote, they are first seen asleep; and they remain in the city of Theseus, in mercy.

Elsewhere, furies that make the eyes evil and the heart hard. Seeing Dante from their watch-tower, they call for Medusa. "So will we make flint of him" ("enamel," rather—which has been in the furnace first, then hardened); but Virgil puts his hands over his eyes.

Thus the upper hell is knitted to the central. The central is half joined to the lower by the power of Fraud: only in the central hell, though in a deeper pit of it, (Phlegethon falls into the abyss in a Niagara of blood) Fraud is still joined with human passion, but in the nether hell is passionate no more; the traitors have not natures of flesh or of fire, but of earth; and the earth-giants, the first enemies of Athena, the Greek

spirit of Life, stand about the pit, speechless, as towers of war. In a bright morning, this last midsummer, at Bologna, I was standing in the shade of the tower of Garisenda, which Dante says they were like. The sun had got just behind its battlements, and sent out rays round them as from behind a mountain peak, vast and grey against the morning sky. I may be able to get some picture of it, for the January 'Fors,' perhaps; and perchance the sun may some day rise for us from behind our Towers of Treachery.

Note but this farther, and then we will try to get out of Hell for to-day. The divisions of the central fire are under three creatures, all of them partly man, partly animal. The Minotaur has a man's body, a bull's head, (which is precisely the general type of the English nation to-day). The Centaur Chiron has a horse's body; a man's head and breast. The Spirit of Fraud, Geryon, has a serpent's body, his face is that of a just man, and his breast chequered like a lizard's, with labyrinthine lines.

All these three creatures signify the mingling of a brutal instinct with the human mind; but, in the Minotaur, the brute rules, the humanity is subordinate; in the Centaur, the man rules, and the brute is subordinate; in the third, the man and the animal are in harmony; and both false.

Of the Centaurs, Chiron and Nessus, one, the type of human gentleness, justice, and wisdom, stooping to join itself with the nature of animals, and to be healed by the herbs of the ground,—the

other, the destruction of Hercules,—you shall be told in the 'Fors' of January: to-day I must swiftly sum the story of Theseus.

His conquest of the Minotaur, the chief glory of his life, is possible only to him through love, and love's hope and help. But he has no joy either of love or victory. Before he has once held Ariadne in his arms, Diana kills her in the isle of Naxos. Jupiter crowns her in heaven, where there is no following her. Theseus returns to Athens alone.

The ship which hitherto had carried the Minotaur's victims only, bore always a black sail. Theseus had received from his father a purple one, to hoist instead, if he returned victorious.

The common and senseless story is that he forgot to hoist it. Forgot! A sail is so inconspicuous a part of a ship! and one is so likely to forget one's victory, returning, with home seen on the horizon! But he returned *not* victorious, at least for himself; —Diana and Death had been too strong for him. He bore the black sail. And his father, when he saw it, threw himself from the rock of Athens, and died.

Of which the meaning is, that we must not mourn for *ourselves*, lest a worse thing happen to us,—a Greek lesson much to be remembered by Christians about to send expensive orders to the undertaker: unless, indeed, they mean by their black vestments to tell the world that they think their friends are in hell. If in Heaven, with Ariadne and the gods, are we to mourn? And if they were fit for Heaven, are we, for ourselves, ever to leave off mourning? Yet

Theseus, touching the beach, is too just and wise to mourn *there*. He sends a herald to the city to tell his father he is safe; stays on the shore to sacrifice to the gods, and feast his sailors. He sacrifices; and makes pottage for them there on the sand. The herald returns to tell him his father is dead also. Such welcome has he for his good work, in the islands, and on the main.

In which work he persists, no less, and is redeemed from darkness by Hercules, and at last helps Hercules himself in his sorest need—as you shall hear afterwards. I must stop to-day at the vegetable soup,—which you would think, I suppose, poor Christmas cheer. Plum-pudding is an Egyptian dish; but have you ever thought how many stories were connected with this Athenian one, pottage of lentils? A bargain of some importance, even to us, (especially as usurers); and the healing miracle of Elisha; and the vision of Habakkuk as he was bearing their pottage to the reapers, and had to take it far away to one who needed it more; and, chiefly of all, the soup of the bitter herbs, with its dipped bread and faithful company,—"he it is to whom I shall give the sop when I have dipped it." The meaning of which things, roughly, is, first, that we are not to sell our birthrights for pottage, though we fast to death; but are diligently to know and keep them: secondly, that we are to poison no man's pottage, mental or real: lastly, that we look to it lest we betray the hand which gives us our daily bread.

Lessons to be pondered on at Christmas time over our pudding; and the more, because the sops we are dipping for each other, and even for our own children, are not always the most nourishing, nor are the rooms in which we make ready their last supper always carefully furnished. Take, for instance, this example of last supper—(no, I see it is breakfast)—in Chicksand Street, Mile End:—

On Wednesday an inquest was held on the body of Annie Redfern, aged twenty-eight, who was found dead in a cellar at 5, Chicksand Street, Mile End, on the morning of last Sunday. This unfortunate woman was a fruit-seller, and rented the cellar in which she died at 1*s.* 9*d.* per week—her only companion being a little boy, aged three years, of whom she was the mother. It appeared from the evidence of the surgeon who was summoned to see the deceased when her body was discovered on Sunday morning that she had been dead some hours before his arrival. Her knees were drawn up and her arms folded in such a position as to show that she died with her child clasped in her arms. The room was very dark, without any ventilation, and was totally unfit for human habitation. The cause of death was effusion of serum into the pericardium, brought on greatly by living in such a wretched dwelling. The coroner said that as there were so many of these wretched dwellings about, he hoped the jurymen who were connected with the vestry would take care to represent the case to the proper authorities, and see that the place was not let as a dwelling again. This remark from the coroner incited a juryman to reply, "Oh, if we were to do that, we might empty half the houses in London; there are thousands more like that, and worse." Some

of the jurors objected to the room being condemned; the majority, however, refused to sign the papers unless this was done, and a verdict was returned in accordance with the evidence. It transpired that the body had to be removed to save it from the rats. If the little child who lay clasped in his dead mother's arms has not been devoured by these animals, he is probably now in the workhouse, and will remain a burden on the ratepayers, who unfortunately have no means of making the landlord of the foul den that destroyed his mother answerable for his support.

I miss, out of the column of the *Pall Mall* for the 1st of this month, one paragraph after this, and proceed to the next but one, which relates to the enlightened notion among English young women, derived from Mr. J. Stuart Mill,—that the "career" of the Madonna is too limited a one, and that modern political economy can provide them, as the *Pall Mall* observes, with "much more lucrative occupations than that of nursing the baby." But you must know, first, that the Athenians always kept memory of Theseus' pot of vegetable soup, and of his sacrifice, by procession in spring-time, bearing a rod wreathed with lambs'-wool, and singing an Easter carol, in these words:—

"Fair staff, may the gods grant, by thee, the bringing of figs to us, and buttery cakes, and honey in bulging cups, and the sopping of oil, and wine in flat cups, easy to lift, that thou mayest" (meaning that *we* may, but not clear which is which,) "get drunk and sleep."

Which Mr. Stuart Mill and modern political economy have changed into a pretty Christmas carol for English children, lambs for whom the fair staff also brings wine of a certain sort, in flat cups, "that they may get drunk, and sleep." Here is the next paragraph from the *Pall Mall*:—

One of the most fertile causes of excessive infant mortality is the extensive practice in manufacturing districts of insidiously narcotising young children, that they may be the more conveniently laid aside when more lucrative occupations present themselves than that of nursing the baby. Hundreds of gallons of opium in various forms are sold weekly in many districts for this purpose. Nor is it likely that the practice will be checked until juries can be induced to take a rather severe view of the suddenly fatal misadventures which this sort of chronic poisoning not unfrequently produces. It appears, however, to be very difficult to persuade them to look upon it as other than a venial offence. An inquest was recently held at Chapel Gate upon the body of an infant who had died from the administration, by its mother, of about twelve times the proper dose of laudanum. The bottle was labelled carefully with a caution that "opium should not be given to children under seven years of age." In this case five drops of laudanum were given to a baby of eighteen months. The medical evidence was of a quite unmistakable character, and the coroner in summing up read to the jury a definition of manslaughter, and told them that "a lawful act, if dangerous, not attended with such care as would render the probability of danger very small, and resulting in death, would amount to manslaughter at the least. Then in this case they must return a

verdict of manslaughter unless they could find any circumstance which would take it out of the rule of law he had laid down to them. It was not in evidence that the mother had used any caution at all in administering the poison." Nevertheless, the jury returned, after a short interval, the verdict of homicide by misadventure.

"Hush-a-bye, baby, upon the tree top," my mother used to sing to me: and I remember the dawn of intelligence in which I began to object to the bad rhyme which followed:—"when the wind blows, the cradle will rock." But the Christmas winds must blow rudely, and warp the waters askance indeed, which rock our English cradles now.

Mendelssohn's songs without words have been, I believe, lately popular in musical circles. We shall, perhaps, require cradle songs with very few words, and Christmas carols with very sad ones, before long; in fact, it seems to me, we are fast losing our old skill in carolling. There is a different tone in Chaucer's notion of it (though this carol of his is in spring-time indeed, not at Christmas):—

"Then went I forth on my right hand,
Down by a little path I found,
Of Mintës full, and Fennel greene.
* * * *
Sir Mirth I found, and right anon
Unto Sir Mirth gan I gone,
There, where he was, him to solace:
And with him, in that happy place,

So fair folke and so fresh, had he,
That when I saw, I wondered me
From whence such folke might come,
So fair were they, all and some ;
For they were like, as in my sight
To angels, that be feathered bright.
These folke, of which I tell you so,
Upon a karole wenten tho,*
A Ladie karoled them, that hight †
Gladnesse, blissful and light.
She could make in song such refraining
It sate her wonder well to sing,
Her voice full clear was, and full sweet,
She was not rude, nor unmeet,
But couth ‡ enough for such doing,
As longeth unto karolling ;
For she was wont, in every place,
To singen first, men to solace.
For singing most she gave her to,
No craft had she so lefe § to do."

Mr. Stuart Mill would have set her to another craft, I fancy (not but that singing is a lucrative one, nowadays, if it be shrill enough); but you will not get your wives to sing thus for nothing, if you send them out to earn their dinners (instead of earning them yourselves for them), and put their babies summarily to sleep.

It is curious how our English feeling seems to be changed also towards two other innocent kind of creatures. In nearly all German pictures of the Nativity, (I have given you an Italian one of the Magi for a frontispiece, this time,) the dove is one

* Went *then* in measure of a carol dance. † Was called.
‡ Skilful. § Fond.

way or other conspicuous, and the little angels round the cradle are nearly always, when they are tired, allowed by the Madonna to play with rabbits. And in the very garden in which Ladie Gladness leads her karol-dance, "connis," as well as squirrels, are among the happy company; frogs only, as you shall hear, not being allowed; the French says, no flies either, of the watery sort! For the path among the mint and fennel greene leads us into this garden:—

"The garden was by measuring,
Right even and square in compasing:
It was long as it was large,
Of fruit had every tree his charge,
And many homely trees there were,*
That peaches, coines,† and apples bare.
Medlers, plommes, peeres, chesteinis,
Cherise, of which many one faine ‡ is,
With many a high laurel and pine
Was ranged clean all that gardene.
There might men Does and Roes see,
And of Squirrels ful great plentee
From bough to bough alway leping;
Connis there were also playing
And maden many a tourneying
Upon the fresh grass springing.
In places saw I wells there
In which no frogges were.
There sprang the violet all new
And fresh pervinke, rich of hue,

---

* There were foreign trees besides. I omit bits here and there, without putting stars to interrupt the pieces given.

† Quinces. ‡ Fond.

And flowers yellow, white and rede,
Such plenty grew there never in mede,
Full gay was all the ground, and quaint,
And poudred, as men had it peint
With many a fresh and sundry flour
That castes up full good savour."

So far for an old English garden, or "pleasance," and the pleasures of it. Now take a bit of description written this year of a modern English garden or pleasance, and the pleasures of *it*, and newly invented odours:—

In a short time the sportsmen issued from the (new?) hall, and, accompanied by sixty or seventy attendants, bent their steps towards that part of the park in which the old hall is situate. Here were the rabbit covers—large patches of rank fern, three or four feet in height, and extending over many acres. The doomed rabbits, assiduously driven from the burrows during the preceding week by the keepers, forced from their lodgings beneath the tree-roots by the suffocating fumes of sulphur, and deterred from returning thither by the application of gas-tar to the "runs," had been forced to seek shelter in the fern patch; and here they literally swarmed. At the edge of the ferns a halt was called, and the head gamekeeper proceeded to arrange his assistants in the most approved "beating" fashion. The shooting party, nine in number, including the prince, distributed themselves in advance of the line of beaters, and the word "Forward!" was given. Simultaneously the line of beaters moved into the cover, vigorously thrashing the long ferns with their stout sticks, and giving vent to a variety of uncouth ejaculations, which it was supposed were calculated to terrify the hidden rabbits. Hardly had

the beaters proceeded half-a-dozen yards when the cover in front of them became violently agitated, and rabbits were seen running in all directions. The quantity of game thus started was little short of marvellous—the very ground seemed to be alive. Simultaneously with the appearance of the terrified animals the slaughter commenced. Each sportsman carried a double-barrelled breechloader, and an attendant followed him closely, bearing an additional gun, ready loaded. The shooter discharged both barrels of his gun, in some cases with only the interval of a second or two, and immediately exchanged it for a loaded one. Rabbits fell in all directions. The warning cry of "Rabbit!" from the relentless keepers was heard continuously, and each cry was as quickly followed by the sharp crack of a gun—a pretty sure indication that the rabbit referred to had come to an untimely end, as the majority of the sportsmen were crack shots.

Of course all this is quite natural to a sporting people who have learned to like the smell of gunpowder, sulphur, and gas-tar, better than that of violets and thyme. But, putting the baby-poisoning, pigeon-shooting, and rabbit-shooting of to-day in comparison with the pleasures of the German Madonna, and her simple company; and of Chaucer and his carolling company: and seeing that the present effect of peace upon earth, and well-pleasing in men, is that every nation now spends most of its income in machinery for shooting the best and bravest men, just when they were likely to have become of some use to their fathers and mothers, I put it to you, my friends all, calling you so, I

suppose for the last time, (unless you are disposed for friendship with Herod instead of Barabbas,) whether it would not be more kind and less expensive, to make the machinery a little smaller; and adapt it to spare opium now, and expenses of maintenance and education afterwards, (besides no end of diplomacy) by taking our sport in shooting babies instead of rabbits?

Believe me,

Faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

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